

# CHRISTIAN COURIER

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Digging holes in  
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58th year of publication

## Up against the wall: the view from the Palestinian side

By Paul Jeffrey

Jerusalem(WCC) – For weeks, Katam Mahmud Zud watched the fence stretch across the fertile field below her house in the West Bank village of Ti'innik. Although she mourned what was happening to her neighbors, who were losing some of their best land, she was thankful she would be left untouched. And then, one day last July, Israeli surveyors left a brightly painted cement marker between her house and the small field where she grows grains and beans for her household of ten. "They told me it marked the route of the second phase of the wall, and that in a few months the construction crews would arrive to build another wall," she said. "Where am I then going to grow food for my children? The wall is taking the food out of their mouths."

### The Wall

The barrier about to separate Zud from her field has different names, depending on who's talking. Most Israelis call it "the separation fence," as in good fences make good neighbors, and claim it's needed to protect them from suicide bombers. Most Palestinians dub it "the wall," evoking memories of Berlin and claiming it all amounts to a wholesale grab of their fertile land and fresh water.

It's actually a fence in places and an eight-meter high concrete wall in others. Originally conceived by progressive Israelis as a way to slow down the expansion of illegal Jewish settlements in the occupied West Bank, it was to be built on the Green Line, the de facto border between Israel and the

West Bank since the 1967 war. In its original conception, the fence would keep unwanted Palestinians out while also slowing the dismembering of the West Bank by the settlements and settler roads that have carved the Palestinians' land into pieces of a jigsaw puzzle that can't be reassembled into anything coherent.

### No way to survive

Prime Minister Ariel Sharon at first opposed the fence, believing nothing should stand in the way of expanding the settlements. Yet as the second intifada wore on and the public clamored for protection from suicide bombers, Sharon expropriated the idea and ordered construction of a barrier which – instead of following the Green Line – meanders in and out of the West Bank, carving fertile valleys and hilltop settlements out of Palestinian territory. Proposed future extensions of the barrier, including one slicing off the Jordan Valley from the rocky highlands, will leave the Palestinians with roughly 42 percent of the West Bank. Any eventual Palestinian state will have lots of people and no viable way to survive.

That's the point, critics charge, claiming Israel either wants a weak and dependent vassal state broken

up into Bantustans and filled with cheap laborers for Israeli industry, or, even better, such an untenable situation that Palestinians will emigrate en masse, leaving behind all of Palestine for the Israelis.

### No other solution

Most Israelis support the barrier's construction. According to Maya Johnston, a researcher at B'Tselem, an Israeli human rights group which opposes the barrier,

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"Separation fence" under construction near the West Bank town of Jayyous.

"The wall has been marketed as the best thing since sliced bread in the fight against terrorism. That's why most people support it. They're fed up with buses blowing up and malls exploding, and they don't see any other solution."

### Real protection

Church leaders in the region are vehemently opposed to the barrier's construction. "The separation wall is an expensive psychological tool. If I am an Israeli sitting over there and I see the wall go up, I can think, 'Wow, now I am protected.' Yet that's only psychological. It will give some Israelis the feeling that now these rascals are not going to come in. But for how long? What if Palestinians find ways to create holes in the wall, or under the wall. What do you do then?" asked Bernard Sabella, executive director of the Department of Service to Palestinian Refugees of

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## Failure of Cancun talks threatens farmers in developing nations

Harry der Nederlanden

The meetings of the World Trade Organization held in Cancun, Mexico in September were perhaps not the sort of thing to make us – as part of the Christian community – sit up and take notice. They seem at first glance to have little to do with our Sunday worship. Yet, the two are related. What we put in the offering to help the poor on Sunday, we may take away on Monday by the kind of trade policies our countries (the rich)

establish with the developing countries that our aid organizations are trying to help.

According to some economists, if Europe and the US lifted their agricultural subsidies so that African farmers could compete on an equal footing, the annual income of people living in sub-Saharan Africa would rise by as much as 13 percent. Ending the subsidies would, thus, do more for people in these mainly agricultural developing countries than foreign aid and diaconal help combined.

So it was little wonder that at the WTO talks the subsidies rated high on the list of priorities of developing countries like Congo, Burundi, Tanzania or Mali, for between 45-60 percent of their gross domestic production comes from agriculture (contrasted to 1.4 and 3 percent for the US and Europe respectively). Farmers in these countries could sell their goods for prices well below those in the US and Europe. However, the latter help their own farmers

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## News

## The Wall



Ecumenical accompanier Matt Robson photographs the 8-metre-high "separation fence" at Qalqilya. PHOTO COURTESY OF WCC

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the Middle East Council of Churches.

"Real protection comes from the kind of relationship you have. And you don't all of a sudden sever the relationship that's always been there. You can't escape it. It will come back to haunt you if you don't solve it," said Sabella.

Bishop Riah Abu El-Assal, the Episcopal bishop in Jerusalem, warns that Israelis are fencing themselves in as well. "The best of secure borders are reconciled neighbors, and the closest of neighbors are the Palestinians. The Israelis need to wake up before it is too late. Those fences and walls will not only encircle the Palestinian towns and add to the grudges, but they will also close the Israeli community into a kind of ghetto," he said.

"The root cause of all of this business of building walls is the occupation. Once the Israelis quit occupying the lands of others, then they can hope for and receive the security they so desire. This is not the time to build walls. This is the time to build bridges. And only if they learn how to build a bridge rather than a wall will they guarantee themselves security, peace, and stability," the bishop said.

Many Palestinians say they wouldn't oppose the wall if it were built on the Green Line. "If they're going to build the wall, they should do it on their land, not ours," said Ghazi Hanania, a Greek Orthodox member of the Palestinian Legislative Council.

## No access to water

Israel's claim that the wall is

being built for security doesn't impress many who live under Israeli occupation. "The wall is not about security, it's about stealing land. Israelis want the land, and they also want peace. But they can't have both," said Dr. George Imseih, a pediatrician working in the Ama'ri refugee camp in Ramallah.

## Without work we are dead

By increasing the hardships of life in the occupied territories, the barrier may actually exacerbate security problems for the residents of Israel. "Whose security is the wall for? Do the Israelis feel more secure when we lose our land, when we cannot harvest our olives, when our men have psychological problems because they can't feed their children? With the wall, life has become no different than death, because without land and without work we are dead. That's what drives the suicide bombers. If I had a choice to go kill myself, I'd prefer it to being dead while still living," said Mozain Jorban, a woman in the West Bank village of Rummana where nearly every family has lost precious farm land to the barrier.

Just as water has been an essential element of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict since the 1940s, it's also key to understanding the barrier's design today. "When you look at a map of the natural resources of the West Bank, especially the water resources, and compare it with a map of the wall, you'll see that they match. That's not a coincidence," said Abdul-Latif Khaled, a hydrologist in Jayyous, where farmers have been cut off

from their fertile fields – and all the town's wells – by the fence.

Unwilling to accept the wholesale loss of their lands, 32 Jayyous farmers spend most nights of the week camped out in their fields on the far side of the barrier, accompanied at times by international members of the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel, coordinated by the World Council of Churches. The farmers intend to stay there, especially through the critical olive harvest in October, to make sure the Israeli military doesn't lock them out of their fields for good.

## No solace for the farmers

They aren't impressed with government promises that a gate built into the fence by their village will always be usable. In late August it was only being opened one hour in the morning and one hour in the evening. "The gate only exists for the media, so the Israelis can say they let the Palestinians go through the gates to their fields. But it's a lie," said Shareef Omar Khaled, one of the farmers, saying Israeli settlers have fenced Palestinian farmers out of their fields in several locations, leaving gates that after several months were kept permanently locked.

In an August meeting with a delegation from the World Council of Churches, the head of the Religious Affairs Bureau of the Israeli foreign ministry, Gadi Golan, dismissed the farmers' complaints that they were losing farmland to the wall. "The land where the fence is built continues to belong to the farmers. It's not expropriated. They will have trouble using it, that's true, but it remains their property," Golan said.

That's no solace for the farmers in Jayyous, who say they are determined not to let the fence stop them from working their fields and harvesting their crops. "If we farmers lose our farms we will be turned into beggars. That's why we've moved to the tents. We're determined to stay on our land. Even if the army tries to destroy us by force, we are ready to die, but not to live as beggars," said Shareef Omar Khaled.

## Cancun

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by artificially reducing the price of what they produce, either by subsidizing them or by imposing taxes on imports from other countries.

## Developing countries formed group

The Cancun meetings, the fifth of a series of trade negotiations begun in late 2001, were to deal with a lot more issues than agricultural subsidies, however, and Europe and the US were determined to defer this issue and first deal with matters left over from the previous meetings in Dohar. But in this round, a number of the developing countries came primed for bear. They formed a group of 21 countries (of 146 countries represented) that demanded that their interests be put center stage. They were dubbed the G-21.

Neither side budged, and to the joy of the demonstrators who have sought to disrupt the entire series of talks, the negotiations broke down. That doesn't help anyone, least of all the developing countries.

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, writing in the *British Guardian* Sept. 8 said that what happened in Cancun "could make the difference between opportunity and poverty, perhaps even between life and death, for millions of people in poor countries." He urged the rich countries to phase out the subsidies as quickly as possible, pointing out that they often do not even help small farmers in the rich countries but only the largest and richest. The G-21 went even further than calling for the removal of subsidies; they even wanted the US, for example, to reimburse their cotton farmers to the tune of \$ 300 million for the losses they've suffered over past years. Fat chance!

Well before the Cancun round of meetings began Europe's agricultural commissioner, Franz Fischler, had already made it clear that Europe, which has the highest subsidies, will continue to protect its farmers. He accused developing countries of demanding drastic changes from Europe while refusing to undertake necessary changes themselves. It is feared that the creation of blocs and the polarization threatens to derail the process

as it approaches finalization.

Delegates from the US have already indicated that perhaps it would be more fruitful for them to pursue the course of bilateral and regional treaties, like the NAFTA agreement between the US and Canada. Some fear that election year rhetoric about the loss of manufacturing jobs in the US will prompt renewed efforts at protectionism.

## The losers will be the poor nations

World Bank president James Wolfensohn, writing in the *Financial Times* Sept. 8, stressed that it was important to all involved that the lowering of tariffs and the stimulation of trade continues, estimating that it would lead to some \$520 billion in income gains. The economic growth could ideally lift an additional 140 million people in developing countries out of abject poverty within ten years after implementation.

"If we fail," said Supachai Panitchpakdi, director general of the WTO, "the losers will be the poor and weaker nations."

Similarly, Phil Bloomer of Oxfam said he took no delight in the failure of the talks, which he said was a blow to poor nations that need immediate relief for their farmers. "It appears the US and Europe were not prepared to listen and take the necessary steps to make global trade rules work for the poor as well as the rich," he said.

## Cotton subsidies

One of the focal points of G-21 demands became the subsidy of some \$3 billion a year that the US pays out each year to its 25,000 cotton farmers. That US cotton became the focus is probably part and parcel of the global situation, including the prickly relationship between the US and Europe. The subsidies in Europe, after all, probably do more damage to Africa and Asia than the US counterparts.

It is true that countries like Mali and Burkina Faso would have a competitive advantage in raising cotton if the playing field were level. The world price for cotton has fallen in recent years to about 40 cents a pound, but US cotton farmers, with the help of the government get paid 66 cents a pound. Such subsidies on a number of agricultural products



## News

## Shalom Manor breaks new ground



Pictured at the ground-breaking ceremony are Mrs. Hilda Gerritsen, Shalom's longest resident (she has lived in shalom since its opening and is 99 years old), with Clarence Boonstra, chairman of the board of directors, and Chris Rynberg, CEO.

Shalom Manor, a long term care facility built 25 years ago for Dutch-Canadians, had a ground-breaking ceremony Friday, September 12 to launch its rebuilding program.

The home was built in 1979 for \$1.5 million with room for 72 beds. It was expanded four times, but always had a waiting list.

The present remodeling is much more than that. It will increase Shalom's capacity to 180 beds and

will cost \$18 million. The entire existing structure will be rebuilt to conform to present standards, but it will be done step by step so as not to disrupt the lives of the residents too much. Chris Rynberg, CEO of Shalom, compared it to open heart surgery. The new kitchen, built beside the present building, is almost ready, but the rest will take 2-3 years to complete.

## Cancun

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make it impossible for farmers outside the US to compete with US farmers. This is, of course, precisely the sort of thing the US squawks that Canada does with softwood lumber.

Where does Canada stand in all this? Canada, too, has been calling for reductions in farm subsidies because they hurt our trade with the US. The present negotiations, however, have little impact on Canada's economy, says Bill Dymond, director of Canada's only trade think-tank, quoted in the Financial Post. More than 85 percent of Canada's trade is with the US and he looks to the establishment of a permanent NAFTA court to settle disputes like that over softwood lumber. Like Europe, therefore, Canada is more concerned with ironing out rules and regulations so that a more powerful country like the US cannot abuse them with impunity.

Leaders from the world's major ecumenical bodies — the World Council of Churches, the Lutheran World Federation, the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and the Conference of European Churches met the week prior to the Cancun talks to remind the WTO delegates that economic development ought to be rooted in spiritual, moral and ethical perspectives.

"In evaluating WTO agreements so far," the church leaders said, "we ask the following questions: Are they just and fair — especially to the vulnerable and impoverished? For these, we believe, God has expressed a preferential option. Do the agreements support right relationships between North and South, between producers and consumers, and between the powerful and the powerless? Are they friendly to God's creation? Do they enhance and not diminish the planet's capacity to sustain and nurture present as well as future generations of humankind and all other life forms? Do they affirm human dignity and care for life in all its richness and diversity?"

The statement went on to warn that the agenda of the Northern governments seems often to be driven largely by corporate interests at the expense of economic justice. They also warned against the commodification of essential public services such as water, health and education, and urged that they be kept out of negotiations. Among other things addressed by the church leaders was that the rights of pharmaceutical companies to protect their patents should not override the desperate needs of those wasting away from diseases like malaria and AIDS in poor countries unable to afford expensive drugs.

## Cotton farmers in Mali losing livelihood

Winston Bosch, CRWRC staff in Mali

Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (CRWRC) programs in cotton spinning were, at one time, able to bring a decent profit to poor families in Mali. But not any more. What is happening?

The people of the Malian village of Korin are organized and hard working, but still things are difficult, and with the lack of rain many days are hungry days. These farmers, like millions of others in West and Central Africa, grow cotton and sell it for cash to provide for their families. But free market world cotton prices are at an all-time low, and falling.

The men and women of Korin understand what is happening. They know that US cotton corporations are getting bigger and richer through US taxpayer price subsidies while the world market prices hit all-time lows.

Guese Coulibaly, president of the Village Association recognizes the Malian government's responsibilities, but knows they don't really have the means to help. "I don't think governments in countries like the United States really understand our situation, the poverty we live in," he explains. "Can't they use some of the subsidy money to help us? American farmers can change crops, what can we do?"

Niji, one of the village's cotton farmers, made about \$815 from last year's harvest. After he paid off the bank and the hired labor, he and his family were left with about \$110. Thirteen people, six months of work, \$110. The people in Niji's family were making about four cents a day. But it gets worse. The cotton price has dropped again this

year by three cents a kilo. Estimated profits this year for Niji are around \$45. If the past year is anything to go by then food will be scarce, medical problems and expenses will be disastrous, and even more of the young people will have to be sent away from the village to find work and money.

What can they do? The village women have been trying to make and sell oil from local trees, but it is not enough. The Village Association has talked about switching to growing more vegetables, or selling mangos, but the problems are numerous and the prospects few.

In the face of powerful US farm lobby groups and the billions of dollars granted through the US Farm bill, the Malian farmer faces a bleak future. The village blacksmith pushes back his battered hat and sums up to the nods of the others: "The people here are without a voice, we have built our own school — we are capable people, but we have no voice. All we need is a chance."

Oxfam tells us that the US cotton subsidies total more than three times the entire US Agency for International Development aid budget for Africa's 500 million people. The economic losses inflicted by the US cotton subsidy program far outweigh the benefits of its aid. Mali received \$37 million in aid in 2001 but lost \$43 million as a result of lower export earnings.

To see what you can do, go to the CRWRC website (<http://www.crwrc.org/programs/justice/index.html>) read the rest of Winston Bosch's excellent article and then go to [www.crcjustice.org](http://www.crcjustice.org), and find the Advocate Newsletter for August, 2003.



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## Editorials

# Giving thanks for the power

Harry der Nederlanden

"Religion is always about power."

That's the thought that seized on me as I watched the ground-breaking ceremonies at Shalom Manor and listened to the speeches.

You may think that's freaky thought to have on such an occasion and I'd have done better to take an antacid and forget the idea.

The speakers piously and appropriately spoke of years of God's faithfulness over the last 25 years, and then went on to speak of the dedication and hard work of the board and the faithfulness of the supporting community. Officials from three levels of government also stepped forward to offer congratulations – and to take a little bow for their modest roles in making this building and what happens in it sprout up miraculously out of the stony ground of the Niagara escarpment.

Looking around the Shalom lounge where we had gathered with the residents to hear the speakers, I saw Shalom nursing staff scattered among the residents, those who worked in the office, the chaplain, the maintenance man, a few volunteers. Along the front sat various board members and on the window sill off to the side sat someone from Brouwer construction, which is doing the remodeling.

The government reps had at some time in the past devoted some part of their attention to helping the board obtain permissions and funds to erect the building and to pass legislation supporting funding for the operating expenses. The board's involvement had to be more continuous and more intense. And this was much more true of the staff. Every day they rise from their beds in the morning and make themselves ready to spend their day taking care of your mother and father or opa and oma.

All that talent and energy organized and directed to make sure you and I, if the day comes when we can no longer take care of ourselves, will have a place to crash and have caring people look after us. That involves the deployment of an amazing amount of power – power of diverse kinds, political power, organizing power, accounting power, counseling, nursing and cleaning power. And every day it all comes together in that building so that everything needful gets done.

That's no little thing. It doesn't happen very often in countries like Iraq where private initiative has been quashed by a dictator. When Khrushchev visited the US many years ago, he marveled at seeing people going about voluntarily doing their share in this collective enterprise that is our society without being directed by government officials. Years later Gorbachev remarked on the same thing.

## Stalinism

I'm reading the last volume in a trilogy by the Russian novelist Anatolii Rybakov, that traces the lives of several very different characters during the time of Stalin's ruthless rise to power. Through the eyes of the various characters we see how Stalin systematically destroys every bit of initiative and free exercise of power throughout the Soviet empire, exterminating all those with a place to stand apart from his sovereign will, uprooting whole populations, tearing apart and scattering families, arbitrarily dismantling organizations and industries to reshape them to his own will. Soon no one dares to undertake any action on his own initiative, no matter how positive and reasonable, for fear of drawing attention to himself. Undertaking anything not initiated by the mind of Stalin becomes treason. In fact, even those who faithfully execute Stalin's will are in danger of being exterminated at any time if they appear too competent. An entire country, an empire, running on the fuel of fear.

The portrait of absolutism that Rybakov paints reminds me of the philosophy of Jean-Paul Sartre, sometimes called the philosopher of freedom. Sartre's vision of being and order is that of an inverted neoplatonism. In neoplatonism God is the source of light and being, the great sun from whom flows all power and being into all his creation and creatures. The more of the divine that flows into you, the more being you possess and the more you are infused with the mind and the will of God. In Sartre, the opposite is true. The more you participate in being, the less of you – the free self – there is, for the more you are determined from the outside. The sun of being becomes a black hole, sucking authentic existence out of you.

"Hell is other people," said Sartre, summing up the absolute law of freedom as human will.

That is a pretty accurate summary of Stalinism. He became the black sun of the Soviet Empire, his dark rays penetrating to every corner to spread paranoia and to extinguish initiative and hope. He became the heart, mind and soul of the state – its sole source of power. And there was no shalom.

In Sartre's vision, of course, each and every one of us in order to be truly human must act as his own sun, as a Stalin. Life becomes a perpetual struggle to avoid becoming a satellite in someone else's orbit of power. You must turn yourself into a bar of wet soap, popping out of being's grasp as soon as the squeeze is put on.

## Our God is a bureaucrat

From the Shalom ground-breaking to a Sartrean bar of soap. The one is the mirror opposite of the other. Walk around Shalom and you come away quite sure that the place is aptly named: it is in many ways a seedling of the shalom,

the peace and order, of the kingdom of heaven.

That doesn't mean that there are never staff tensions, that the board never acts imperiously or that the residents never snarl at the staff and vice versa. I worked on the geriatric wing of Pine Rest Psychiatric Hospital for several years, so I know how it goes. There's more than a smidgen of truth to Sartre's view of man. If left to ourselves, we would get caught up in just such a war of all against all, a life together in which we are always jockeying for dominance – for ourselves, for our race, for our gender, for our class.

But look around. Everywhere people are working together in organizations and institutions for the good of others, channeling and directing talents and energies to make life better, to bring healing, to give them a taste of shalom. My best guess is that it happens because God is interested in upholding these things that uphold us.

Our God is a bureaucrat. He works through offices. Our God is a God who is not just interested in having one-on-one relationships with each of us. He takes pleasure in weaving us together in all sorts of structured relationships. It was his idea that we should find joy and fulfilment in working together for common ends for one another's good.

The dark view of Sartre regarding power and structures – whether they be institutions or traditions or worldviews – that consigns them as hostile and inimical by nature to our freedom and to our common good has become very widespread. Even among Christians. Many see the work of the Holy Spirit only in the unpredictable, the coincidental, the unplanned. It is, of course, true that the Spirit does not need our power structures and that he doesn't always elect to work through presidents, popes, CEOs, Phds or Mds. But to assume that he always bypasses them is to close off a huge, central part of our life and work from the renewing power of God's power, the Spirit of God.

## Gratitude and thanksgiving

I know I've sounded this theme before, but when we read about the often questionable doings of governments, listen to the often hypocritical rhetoric of politicians running for office, hear of the machinations of CEOs and corporations to increase profits, see institutions lose sight of the goal of service and focus instead on self preservation, we are tempted to lose sight of God's presence in this dimension of reality. These things should be pointed out, of course. Most news reporting and analysis does just that, also in CC. But to ignore the grace that flows into our lives from the structures and institutions and see only the bad is not realism; it is ingratitude.

It is to see a part of reality not as a vehicle for God's love and care but as a prison that distances us from him. It is a subtle way of accusing God of creating us badly. To a great many postmoderns, these "permanent things" – institutions, traditions and worldviews – are precisely what prevent us from being vital, free, loving creatures.

That's a perspective we must wrestle free from if we are to live lives of thanksgiving. We are not just given rain and sunshine and the bountiful harvest of the fields. This Thanksgiving let us also thank God for governments, marriage, churches, corporations, schools, hospitals, nursing homes, courts, unions, stores and office buildings. These too are signs that God is constantly courting us, extorting love and good works from us that his name may be glorified and we might experience shalom.

Institutions and other things we make to enhance our power do often become closed to God's power. But the way to keep them open to his shalom is to cultivate gratitude and to never cease giving thanks.

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## Letters

### Truth, pluralism and lies

Webster's dictionary defines wrong as: "Not right; not according to rule, wish, design, or the like; not what ought to be; not according to moral law or right; not according to facts or truth." Who decides what is right, true and moral – an appointed judge, an elected politician, the collective voice of the people, God?

The opening sentence of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms reads "Whereas Canada is founded upon the principles that recognize the supremacy of God and the rule of law:" Can the laws of this country disregard the supremacy of God and still offer its citizens freedom?

God instructs mankind through his servant Moses in Leviticus 18: 2, "Do not lie with a man as one lies with a woman; that is detestable."

I once knew a man who was gay. I say once because he doesn't live here anymore. He enjoyed life. It was simple and straightforward. He understood God's will for life, wasn't at all confused in his thinking so he could enjoy life, which prompted him to sing and whistle a lot. He was content, dependable, steady and even-tempered. I loved him. He was my grandfather. Gay then meant happy, cheerful, joyful. When did it come to mean homosexual?

As I was reflecting on Bert Witvoet's article and your editorial Harry, I became very angry. Angry because the truth is being suppressed; angry because although in 2002 an Ipsos-Reid poll found that two-thirds of Canadians hold religion to be very important, it would appear that almost two-thirds of Canadians think religion is a private matter. Angry because we don't or can't hear the truth; angry because the absolute truth appears to be absolute subjectivity and relativity; angry because too often I'm afraid to publicly say, "God said."

I went to the garage, put on my daughters' boxing gloves and started beating the punching bag until my hands hurt and I ran out of breath.

Can or should Christians say, "God said" in the public arena of debate?

I personally disagree with same-sex marriages. Our Prime Minister seems to think that same-sex unions are a result of social evolution and like it or not we better get used to it. It doesn't matter what God said. It doesn't matter what I say. Religion and politics don't mix – oil and water. But when the state attempts to sanction, and the church blesses a relationship that is against God's directive, it impacts me, a member of society, and I am obliged to voice my concern. I may offend someone if I say I'm against same-sex marriages, but I am offended when I see two men kissing in public. I am equally offended when I see Christians rally under the banner God Hates Fags.

On August 22, I participated in the Canadians Against Same-Sex Marriage rally, in Ottawa. One of the many speakers, a pastor, (I don't recall his name, and I para-

phrase), stated that Christians are coming under increased persecution and he personally welcomes it. It might awaken the church from its' religious complacency, he said. He revoked his provincial license to marry and challenged all ministers to do the same, stating that with the approval of Bill C 250 churches would be required by law to marry same-sex couples.

Christians have a responsibility to speak truth – God's truth – yet, sadly, among those who call themselves Christians, it is becoming increasingly more apparent that there is lack of consensus on what God said.

Members and influential leaders of the United, Anglican, Catholic as well as the Christian Reformed Churches have conflicting points of view and interpret God's directive differently. The church no longer speaks as one voice. The unity Jesus prayed for among his people is wanting.

Bert Witvoet in his letter *Do not move an ancient boundary* Aug. 23, writes, "What concerns me is that the truth is being suppressed and that our society will be reshaped in a way that will make the wrong seem right, and the right, wrong. God help a civilization that no longer provides guideposts for its people. God help a church that follows that trend." Amen.

Too often Christians think they have the awesome, and seemingly impossible responsibility of changing how people think. I would like to suggest that our calling is to live a life that brings God glory. It becomes a lifestyle, impacting everything we do and say. How he chooses to act on that is his business. Only he can change the heart.

God help us to come out of the closet, clothed with a spirit of humility, love and courage.

Irene VanderSpruit  
Stirling, Ont.

#### Dear Mr. Editor

I was rather surprised to read Mr. Vandezande's article promoting the Edmonton model of education in the province of Ontario. I for one hope to never see the day that this comes about.

As Reformed Christians our forefathers and mothers felt it imperative that Christian Schools be established and maintained by parents. Many second and third generations have and are firmly committed to the ideals that our parents and grandparents so faithfully pursued.

Sure we want funding for our schools from the government. This is only fair. However to have our schools controlled by public boards and have our Christian teachers become members of the militant teachers federations is in my opinion too much to expect.

Gerald promotes a truly pluralistic education system in his article.

In this connection I refer the reader to an interview printed in the September 2003 issue of *Christianity Today* with John R.W. Stott, well-known theologian and author.

He states that the most critical issue facing us today is the issue of pluralism. I quote:

"Pluralism is not just recognition that there is a plurality of faiths in the world today. This is an obvious fact. No, pluralism is itself an ideology. It affirms the independent validity of all faiths. It therefore rejects as arrogant and wholly unacceptable every attempt to convert anybody (let alone everybody) to our opinions.

"The reason we must reject this increasingly popular position is that we are committed to the uniqueness of Jesus (he has no competitors) and his finality (he has no successors). It is not the uniqueness of "Christianity" as a system that we defend, but the uniqueness of Christ. He is unique in his incarnation (which is quite different from the ahistorical and plural "avatars" of Hinduism); in his atonement (dying once for all our sins); in his resurrection (breaking the power of death); and in his gift of the Spirit (to indwell and transform us). So, because in no other person but Jesus of Nazareth did God first become human (in his birth), then bear our sins (in his death), then conquer death (in his resurrection) and then enter his people (by his Spirit), he is uniquely able to save sinners. Nobody else has his qualifications."

Mr. Editor thank you for allowing me to respond to your request for input.

Albert Tamming  
Strathroy, Ontario

#### Reply:

Thank you for your comments.

Although I cannot speak for him, I am sure Gerald Vandezande would agree with Stott. Stott is talking about *religious plu-*

ralism. *Political* pluralism is not the same thing as religious pluralism. It is because people reject religious pluralism and refuse to relinquish their beliefs not just in their personal lives but also in education and politics that political pluralism is necessary. It makes room for believers to give expression to their differing faiths in the public square.

See Gerald's article in CC June 23 and in CC July 7 the letter from Robert Brink and the article by Jonathan Chaplin.

Harry der Nederlanden

#### Response to Prof. Jim Payton's article

I seldom write letters to editors but felt compelled to respond to Prof. Jim Payton's article about a call for the impeachment of President Bush.

Recognizing the good professor's position in academia, I believe a student submitting such an article might have a difficult time achieving a passing grade. He compares the "lies" of Clinton and Bush and questions why Christians are not calling for the impeachment of Bush when he has blood on his hands as opposed to the semen on the hands of Bill Clinton. I was astonished by this incredibly fallacious comparison. Professor Payton in no way establishes that George Bush has lied. The Tom Brokaw article in the same issue reflects the views of a far more objective reporter. He clearly sets forth the truth of what the President believed regarding WMD.

There were those who said that President Roosevelt was less than truthful in the 1940s in what he told the American people about the need for U.S. involvement in W.W.II. But when the troops stood at the mass graves and the concentration camps in Eu-

...see *Response* page 6

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## Letters/Opinion

# Marriage matters

## Harry der Nederlanden

Although four years ago an Alliance motion before the House of Commons in support of the traditional definition of marriage passed by a 216 to 55 margin, Sept. 16 the same motion went down to defeat 137 to 132. The margin was actually narrower than had been anticipated. If it had not been for some abstentions and pressure on Liberal MPs by Chretien and Justice Minister Cauchon, it might have been a dead heat. Cauchon called on Liberal MPs not to support the motion introduced by the Alliance because it would require the government to use the Constitution's notwithstanding clause to overrule the courts.

The Alliance really did not expect the motion to pass; they just wanted to expose the division within the Liberal party and set the stage for marriage as an election issue.

Janet Epp Buckingham, speaking for the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC), expressed disappointment, but added: "It is a positive step to see debate on this issue finally beginning in the House of commons."

Paul Martin, too, voted against the motion, declaring (according to the Canadian Press) that the national fabric is strong enough to

withstand the marriage debate.

Svend Robinson, a strong advocate for same-sex marriage, blamed Martin for making the vote close by splitting the Liberal party.

If it's up to Cauchon, the EFC and the Interfaith Coalition on Marriage and Family won't even get a chance to make their case before the Supreme Court of Canada. He has sought to quash their appeal. The EFC wants to broaden the question before the court, asking if there are other ways to address the matter of discrimination against same-sex couples than to redefine marriage. Cauchon has added insult to injury by saying that the EFC appeal is so trivial that they should also be required to pay for the court costs.

## Bill C-250

One day after the marriage motion failed, the House passed by a vote of 141 to 110 Bill C-250, a private member's bill introduced by NDP Svend Robinson amending the hate section of the criminal code to add homosexuals to the list of groups legally protected from incitement of hatred and genocide. Conviction carries a maximum penalty of up to five years in prison.

The amendment is considered



necessary by many because gays are often targeted by hate groups. The bill received the support of police organizations. It received opposition only from the Alliance. Peter MacKay, leader of the Progressive Conservatives, also voted in favor.

Opposition to the bill by Evangelicals has often been shrill if not hysterical. ("The barbarians are at the gates!" exclaims Ron Gray, leader of the Christian Heritage Party, "C-250 is their Trojan Horse!") They have warned again and again that it will turn the Bible into hate literature simply because it condemns homosexual acts, e.g. in Leviticus. The law will lead to polygamy, group marriage and the legalization of pedophilia, warns Gray.

Bruce Clemenger, president of the EFC and not one to get hysterical, also voiced deep misgivings about the bill. It does not (and perhaps cannot) be very clear about what constitutes hatred, he pointed out, leaving that up to judges to decide.

The EFC statement added that the bill does not sufficiently distinguish between condemning the sin and the sinner. As a result, perhaps even condemning homosexual activity might be construed as inciting hatred.

An amendment to the bill does exempt those expressing beliefs based on a religious text, so it seems more likely that a pastor

will be hauled up before the courts for committing sexual immorality than for preaching against it.

## Locking the door against dissent

The decision to permit blessing of same-sex marriage has brought more embarrassment to the Anglican Church of Canada. Faced with strong opposition from both within his diocese and abroad, the

bishop of New Westminster, Michael Ingham, fired several parish officials who opposed same-sex blessing.

Last year the diocese became the first in the world to officially sanction the blessing of same-sex unions. The fired officials were from St. Martins in Vancouver, which did not go along with the diocese and would like to transfer

...see *Marriage* p. 7

## Response

...continued from p.5

rope, few questioned whether we did the right thing. I've been in correspondence with a soldier who was present recently at the uncovering of the mass graves in Iraq. He has no doubt about the rightness of the President's message. It is time for the Professor to take a clear look at the evil of the Saddam regime rather than to declare an honest fellow Christian a liar on the basis of charges coming out of the American political wars.

When assessing Clinton's admitted deceit of the grand jury, an overwhelming majority of American's believed he lied, not just the "religious right." And he should not brush off the impact of the lie Clinton told. As a practicing pediatrician, I can attest to the marked increase in oral sexual activity that has come in the aftermath, including many young

people in the Christian community who are convinced by the argument that this is not sex. The cases of STD's transmitted in this fashion have skyrocketed. The workplace that was so highly scrutinized for sexual harassment in the wake of Anita Hill and Clarence Thomas became fair ground morally when the president of the United States was allowed to seek favors on the job from an intern. To so casually dismiss the consequences of this behavior is hardly befitting a professor in a Reformed college.

I have often encouraged my college-bound patients of Reformed background to look at all the Reformed colleges, including Redeemer. I would hope the academic standards are higher than this article reflects.

**Ronald M. Hofman**  
Grand Rapids, MI

For our readers with a computer hooked up to the internet, we want to point you to the newly reorganized website of the Reformed Ecumenical Council, of which the CRC is one of the founding members.

Here you will find news about some of the member churches (in sheer numbers the African churches are now in the majority), theological papers written by Reformed theologians and the REC Focus, the latest of which carries some excellent articles on Islam. You can either do a search for Reformed Ecumenical Council or go there directly: <http://community.gospelcom.net/Brix?pageID=2562>

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## Life

## TIME FOR ANOTHER BLACKOUT

Theresa Miedema

*Reporting to you from Ontario's capital...*

Picture the scene. Thursday afternoon on a hot August day in the Big Smoke. It is about 4:15 p.m. Rush hour traffic has begun to clog the streets. People are lining up for the subway and the buses.

## Asleep at the switch

And then some guy in Ohio turned on his air-conditioning. Or perhaps his television. A computer, maybe? It does not really matter. The point is the energy hogs in Ohio created a critical need for electricity.

And then someone fell asleep at the switch. And not just anybody. It was the body that was supposed to watch for critical surges in power usage. The body that was supposed to push the red button marked "emergency." The body that was supposed to cut Ohio off from the central power grid. And it was the switch that was The Important Switch. The switch that prevents a local blackout from becoming a national blackout...and an international blackout. The switch that is painted red, with big letters around it that say "Pull this

## Marriage

*...continued from p. 6*

to another diocese. The bishop, however, sent someone to the church to change the locks, but the man was caught in the act and sent packing by outraged parishioners.

Meanwhile, in Toronto's Holy Trinity Anglican Church the union of two lesbian deacons (a union that has endured for 20 years) received a blessing.

The archbishop of Toronto first said he was surprised by the action, but admitted it may have happened before. Later, he stressed that he was shocked that the ceremony took place after he had refused to give permission. He promised to give those involved a tongue-lashing.

News from the UK tells us that over half of Anglican leaders are mustering to demand that the new Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, excommunicate the American church if it does not reverse its decision to appoint an openly gay man as bishop.

Important Switch in the event of a Blackout...Or Else."

And then the lights went out. Everywhere, or so it seemed. From New York to Chicago to Toronto to Ottawa to Kenora to Timmins. Worse yet, the air conditioning went out. And thus began the Great Blackout of 2003.

## No one knew what to do

I happened to be at St. George and Bloor shortly after the power went out. I noticed that the traffic lights were not working and I thought that someone (not me, of course) should call a cop or Toronto Hydro about that. As I walked to my car, I noticed that there was more than just one traffic light not working. Several lights were out. People were milling around, not sure what to do.

In those initial moments, we Torontonians lost all sense of order. We forgot to line up. We did not take our turn. We ignored the rules of the road! It was wildly chaotic on the streets. No one knew what to do.

For about six minutes or so. Then we remembered that we are Torontonians, after all, and we do line up. We do take our turn. We do follow the rules of the road...well, we won't go that far.

I was not aware of the extent of the blackout immediately. As I got into my car, I could tell that something had happened by the mood on the street. People were starting to gather in small groups. They milled around a bit, but did not seem to move in any direction with any great sense of purpose. Life seemed to have stopped right in the middle of rush hour.

It seemed that something big had occurred. My first real clue came when I turned on the radio...and heard nothing. I realized that the radio stations had lost power. All stations except the CBC, of course. It was from the CBC that I first learned about the extent of the power outage. My first reaction was, "It is going to take a loooong time to drive home."

I live on Millwood Road, between Bayview and Laird. It ordinarily takes me about 20 minutes to drive downtown. On Thursday, it took me 90 minutes. By the time I reached my place, police and various citizens had taken charge of intersections, directing traffic and so forth.

There were hordes of people on

## All of life isn't religion

There is a saying in Reformed circles that "all of life is religion." At its best, this is meant to convey the idea that all of life comes under the care and sovereignty of God and thus faith must direct and inform every cultural endeavor. This is an excellent reminder to Western Christians who have a tendency to compartmentalize their faith, either into a separate Sunday Only box, or a Prayer and Piety Only box. Life in the Spirit of God ignites and transforms every cell in our body, every corner of our existence, and cajoles us into every cultural milieu. Culture is an extension of religious commitments, whatever they may be, and so we build Christian schools, universities.

Unfortunately, "all of life is religion" is easily misinterpreted in a number of interesting but equally erroneous ways. In the end, ironically, students and families nurture what it was intended to correct: a ghettoized faith. One example is when "all of life is religion" becomes "all of life is church." These Christians make the institutional church their whole life, and their calendars are filled with church events, church meetings, and church friends. Church becomes something between a refuge and resort, as church becomes a place for food, basketball, and weekend entertainment. Positively, this may draw neighbors in. It may, however, just as easily keep them out.

## All of Life is Christian.com

A variant of this is the "all of life must be Christian" piety. Some families will only buy material with familiar Christian labels on them: movies, CDs, books, T-shirts, paintings, educational opportunities and even financial investments. This consumer filter is often motivated by a concern for safety, a desire to protect our families from unsavory relations and deceitful teaching. Unfortunately for this crowd, both error and beauty do not respect the artificial boundaries of product labels. One still has to cultivate discernment in life.

Let us approach this from a different angle. Chemists say all of life is chemistry. Sociologists say all of life is socially constructed. For clergy to tell us "all of life is religion" is no different. It's true, but it's not the whole story.

the street, walking. Without power, the TTC could not operate the subway, which carries about 1 million people to and from work each day. One million people, all told to go home at 4:15 p.m. because the power was out and would likely be out for a while. One million people walking the streets, like a big crowd of Bay Street refugees with their pinchy shoes, high heels and brief cases.

## Believer in periodic blackouts

At that moment, I admittedly had a somewhat uncharitable thought: "Suckers. You should have quit work to go back to grad

school like me!"

Now, I know that the blackout was hard on some people. Some people had no food and others were very uncomfortable with the heat (me included). But I actually enjoyed the blackout. My computer was turned off and there was no way of turning it on. No clients could find me. There was no writing of the thesis that could be done. For a glorious 22 hours, I could do nothing but focus on painting and unpacking in my new apartment.

Thanks to the blackout, I was able to finish the painting and to unpack a large portion of my belongings.

Yay Ohio Power Abusers!

## CAMPUS CULTURE

Peter Schuurman



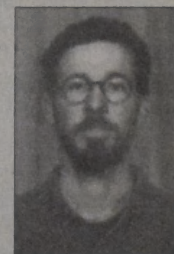
In other words, "all of life is religion" can become a reductionism. All of life becomes reduced to church, Christianity, ethics, or morality, and you've shaped yourself into something artificial, maybe even Pharisaical. "All of life is religion" becomes "all of life is rules," or "all of life is understood" and we become stiff, legalistic, and confined by our own idol. We are more serious than is fitting to life. Is it religious to host a party for no good reason? To tell dumb jokes? To play pond hockey on Sunday? Laugh for twenty minutes without stopping, in that sort of laugh that sounds inhuman and irritating? Is flatulence religious? What about doubt, curiosity, anger? Skydiving? Foreplay? Horrible car crashes?

## All of life is dangerous

This is not just semantics. If "all of life" must be reduced to anything, let it be mystery. At least that allows for an open field to move in. If we are to prevent the box of reduced religion from constricting the Spirit-led life, we must continue to teach and preach that "all of life is religion" means that all of life is lived before the face of God, who is not contained by anything. He surprises us, tests us, and teaches us anew everyday. There are things we won't be able to understand, things we will not have a quick answer for, and things we will do that are just spontaneous, silly, sexy, or weird. We have to constantly re-vamp and re-form our religion as it guides all our cultural expressions. All of life is this never-ending adventure in creative discipleship.

All of life, good life, true life, beautiful life, is a gift of God's Spirit. Those who live by and in that Spirit pass it on with a freshness and vitality that we recognize as a sign of God's love and faithfulness. Thus all of life is gratitude, or more appropriate to this season, "thanksgiving."

Peter Schuurman is chaplain at Brock University in St. Catharines, Ont.



Once the power turned back on (in my neighborhood, around 2:30 p.m. Friday afternoon), I decided that no clients would expect much work to be done by Monday. So I had the entire weekend to work on polishing up the new apartment.

I am now a firm believer in periodic blackouts. I could use one right about now.

I have almost every appliance in my apartment turned on. I am trying to blow the power grid, but I have not had much luck.

Does anyone know someone in Ohio that I could call for help?



## Church

## Mass arrests signals ongoing restrictions

China(Compass) — Officers of China's Public Security Bureau (PSB) arrested 170 Christians at a rural house church meeting in Nanyang, Henan province, on September 2. A source in China reported that most of the detainees were fined, fingerprinted, warned and released. However, PSB officers identified 14 key church leaders and continued to hold them. The mass arrests could mark the renewal of a crackdown against the house church movement, interrupted for several months by the outbreak of SARS. Christians living outside China had hoped for a softer approach when the new president, Hu Jintao, stepped into office. However, Chinese church leaders themselves anticipated ongoing persecution, due to Hu Jintao's past record.

On July 13, police raided a house church in Xiaoshan City, China, at 4 a.m. while Christians were meeting for Sunday prayer and worship. At least three church leaders were arrested, among them eighty-year-old Shen Shaocheng, who helped found the church more than 25 years ago. They are being held at an unknown location, and their families are not allowed to visit.

A week earlier, some 300 Public Security Bureau officers raided an affiliated congregation in Hengpeng village during a Sunday service and demolished the church building. The congregations belong to the "Little Flock" church network, best known for its founder, Watchman Nee, whose writings are widely read by Christians all over the world. Nee was martyred in a labor camp in 1973 and his followers in China still suffer persecution.

## Kenyan churches criticize traditional / Christian funeral rituals fusion

Nairobi (ENI) — Burial services like that of Kenyan Roman Catholic Cardinal Maurice Otunga, which was marked by African drumbeat and song, have drawn protests from some church leaders against funerals blending Christianity and traditional African rituals.

During state mourning and interment of the late Vice-President Michael Wamalwa earlier this month, the Roman Catholic Church led prayers and Wamalwa's clan performed African rituals considered bizarre by certain churches, sparking protests.

The moderator of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa, the Rev. David Githii, expressed shock over the African rituals and urged respect for, yet separation between, the two sets of funeral rites. But the

fusion of rites was repeated at Friday's service for Otunga.

Some church leaders were concerned that such merging of rites would confuse Christians.

"The church should stand firm on the values it is built on. Christian faith emphasizes the rebirth of new converts, where [the convert] sheds off these traditions," the former Presbyterian church moderator, the Rev. George Wanjau, told ENI. "These rituals will cause trouble for Christians and should be discarded."

The Anglican bishop of Nairobi, the Rev. Peter Njoka advocated an unambiguous distinction in funerals between Christian and other rites.

"There should be a clear line on what faith guides the funeral ceremony," Njoka said. "If it is Christian burial, other rituals should be discarded to avoid conflicts."

However, Anglican Archbishop Ndingi Mwana'a Nzeki of Nairobi said his church did not oppose African cultural practices since, he said, they did not conflict with church rules and regulations.

## Australian missionary's killer is handed death sentence by Indian court

By Anto Akkara

New Delhi (ENI) — The National Council of Churches in India said the sentencing by an Indian court of a Hindu extremist to death and of 12 other men to life in prison for burning to death Australian missionary Graham Staines and his two young sons in 1999, sends an important message to extremist groups bent on violence.

Staines, a 58-year-old Baptist missionary, had been running a leprosy home in Baripada in the eastern state of Orissa for 24 years when he and his sons Philip, 10, and Timothy, 8, were burnt alive by a group led by Dara Singh, who accused Staines of converting unsophisticated people living in remote areas.

Presiding Judge Mahendra Nath Pattnaik said when handing down the death sentence on Monday that it would need to be approved by the Orissa High Court.

Singh, who was militantly opposed to conversions from Hinduism, was sentenced to death by hanging for leading the crowd that set alight the car in which Staines and his children were sleeping in a village. The crowd prevented the trio from escaping the inferno.

"Though in the Christian spirit,

Ms. Gladys Staines, wife of the late Graham Staines, had sought God's forgiveness for all those who had killed her husband, the judiciary system has honored her broadmindedness and forgiving heart by punishing the culprits," said the National Council of Churches in India in a statement after the court sentencing.

"This judgement has definitely got its innate long-range implications in curbing the growing religious fanaticism, as Dara Singh is in fact a creation of the hate campaign in this country by the fundamentalist forces," said the Rev.

**"I have forgiven the killers and have no bitterness because forgiveness brings healing, and our land needs healing from hatred...."**

Ipe Joseph, general secretary of the council, which groups 29 Orthodox and Protestant Churches.

Staines's widow said in a statement: "I have forgiven the killers and have no bitterness because forgiveness brings healing, and our land needs healing from hatred and violence. I have no comments regarding the law taking its own

course in crime and punishment."

Richard Howell, a close associate of the slain missionary and general secretary of the Evangelical Fellowship of India, told ENI, "We respect the law of the land. But, we are not in favor of the death penalty."

At the time of his death, Staines was a member of the national executive committee of the evangelical fellowship, a body of more than 300 evangelical groups.

"The death sentence cannot reform the convicted," said Howell, pointing out that "Gladys Staines had already forgiven the killers. Besides," Howell noted, as a result of the death sentence, Hindu groups "might even try to make a martyr out of [Singh]."

As he left the courtroom Singh said, "Injustice has been done to me. I am not going to appeal in the higher court. I would prefer to be a martyr fighting against conversion."

Although Christians often provide education and health care to the downtrodden, Hindu extremists have accused missionaries, who are said to number about 2,000, of trying to convert people to Christianity from Hinduism by bribing or coercing them.

## Poland gets its first female pastor

By Jonathan Luxmoore

Warsaw (ENI) — The Reformed Evangelical Church has become the first in Poland's Protestant minority to appoint a female pastor — 150 years after the first Reformed woman was ordained in the US.

"I know reactions will be mixed, since there are positive and negative voices everywhere, but I hope women especially will approve," said the Rev. Wiera Jelinek.

The 43-year-old pastor was speaking after her Sunday ordination at Zelow, a city south of Warsaw, by the 4000-member church, a member of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches. The ordination is widely expected to clear the way for other women pastors.

The appointment, made possible by a 1991 change in the Polish denomination's ordination rules, was approved by its five-member governing body in 2001. It coincided with the 150th anniversary of the ordination of the world's first woman Reformed pastor,

Antoinette Brown Blackwell, at a Congregational church in South Butler, New York.

In an interview with the Polish church's monthly publication, Jednota, Jelinek said her priorities would include encouraging church members to "take greater responsibility" for the Reformed community in Zelow, where she already runs a church museum and teaches catechism.

She added that she felt a "burden and responsibility" as Poland's first Protestant woman pastor, but was also disappointed that her appointment had "taken so long."

"Every woman wishing to become a pastor has met and will meet some negative reactions, but so do men," said Jelinek, who graduated from Warsaw's ecumenical Christian Theology Academy. She will assist her husband, the Rev. Mirosław Jelinek, in Zelow's 500-member Reformed parish.

"I'm concerned about the future of other women following in my footsteps," said Jelinek. "But per-

haps what's happening with me now will mean that, in a few years, no one pays attention to the sex of God's servants."

The ordination of women has been widely resisted by Protestant denominations in Poland, where opponents claimed the move could be exploited to sow divisions while the country was under communist rule, and could set back ecumenical contacts with the predominant Roman Catholic Church.

An official from the Polish bishops' conference's Council for Ecumenism, Professor Celestyn Napiorkowski, predicted Jelinek's ordination would "weaken the ecumenical climate", but said the Reformed church's "right to its own identity" should also be respected.

At least 15 women deacons have full teaching rights in the 90,000-member Evangelical (Lutheran) Church of the Augsburg Confession in Poland, the country's largest Protestant denomination, which appointed a commission to study women's ordination in 1999.



African ritual cloth.



## Church

# Refugees rebuild their lives in the Maluku Islands



A church in Maluku that is now burned down.

## Ian Freestone

JAKARTA (Compass) — Since the conflict between Muslims and Christians first erupted in January 1999 in the Maluku Islands of Indonesia, an estimated 10,000 lives have been lost and 700,000 people have fled from their homes. For three years, local issues and outside provocation combined forces to wreak havoc in the Malukus (also known as the Moluccas.)

The village of Duma on the island of Halmahera is one of many villages now taking the first, tentative steps of recovery.

## He was not harmed

The history of the church in Duma traces back to the arrival of Hendrik Van Dijken in 1866. Local tribesman invited the Dutch missionary to the village. The people of Halmahera, deciding to test the power of the god Van Dijken represented, suggested he settle in Morodoku, an uninhabited area on the lake of Galela greatly feared by people in that region. The area was the land of the "Moro," the primeval giant who was, according to legend, the ancestor and "lord" of the island.

Van Dijken accepted the challenge and did, in fact, encounter great difficulty. He was struck by a debilitating eye disease and his home was destroyed by a hurricane. In December 1871, heavy rains struck the area, bringing the water in the lake to flood levels and swamping villages all around the lake. Hundreds of people rushed to Van Dijken, asking him to pray to his God for mercy. An open-air prayer service was held and the flood-waters immediately receded.

At this, many villagers became Christians. The name of the village

was changed from Morodoku ("land of the giants") to Duma. Related to the local phrase "Duma wi doohawa," it means, "But he [Van Dijken] was not harmed."

By the end of the year, 200 Galelareses were attending church services at Duma and a new church was dedicated in July 1874. As a sign of new beginnings, Van Dijken planted a mango seed by the lake.

Van Dijken died in June 1900 but the church continued to prosper. He and his wife Maria trained several local people as pastors and evangelists, and within 50 years there were over 40,000 Christians on Halmahera.

During the Japanese occupation of Indonesia in World War II, Christian leaders in Halmahera were suspected of being spies. Leaders were imprisoned on the neighboring island of Ternate, church buildings were used as arsenals and Christians were forbidden to congregate. Many fled into the jungle to worship in secret. In these conditions, with allied bombs exploding around them, the church became a truly indigenous movement.

In January 2000, the fighting that began in Ambon led to a declaration of jihad (holy war) against the Christian community of Halmahera. Thousands of fighters from outside the province advanced across the island, destroying churches and killing Christians. Their target destination was Duma, population 1,500.

## Duma Attacked by Jihad Fighters

On June 19, 2000, just two days after the centenary of Van Dijken's death, Duma was attacked by a force of around 4,000

jihad fighters.

Three years later, village elder Levi Selong recounted the attack while standing amid the ruins of the destroyed church. Unable to hold off the fighters any longer, Selong said, the Christians retreated into the church. Men in the compound tried in vain to defend the women and children who sought refuge inside the building. Homemade weapons and prayer were their only defense against the well-armed mob.

"I didn't want them to take our church," said Kristina, a young woman whose legs were hit with bullets as she tried to roll fuel drums in the path of the attackers. "I fell to the ground wounded and was helped by some of the young people. My father and older brother were killed. They burned

my father alive and cut my brother to pieces with their machetes."

Twenty-year-old Sefnat said his father was killed along with about 200 others. His body was never found. Bombs were directed into the church; many victims were wounded or killed when the roof collapsed. Survivors ran into the jungle and returned days later to bury their dead in crude graves before leaving the village as refugees.

Meanwhile nearby, the mob destroyed the gravestones of Hendrik Van Dijken and his wife Maria. They assumed Duma, the base of missionary outreach to the Malukus, was finished and Christianity would soon be eradicated from Halmahera.

However by July 2003, hundreds of refugees had returned to the villages of Halmahera to re-

build their homes and replant crops. That month, a visitor addressed a large crowd of survivors in Duma and viewed video footage of a memorial procession held in June 2003. The video showed dozens of young children, dressed in black, carrying framed photographs of their older siblings and parents in an unimaginable outpouring of grief.

By way of encouragement, the speaker reminded them of the familiar story of Van Dijken, "he who was not harmed." The mango tree that he planted over 100 years ago now stands majestically beside the lake as a reminder to the people of Duma to offer the fruit of forgiveness and rise once again as ambassadors for peace.

## Life returning to normal in Maluku Islands, Indonesia



Maluku man entertains tourists with bamboo.

AMBON, Indonesia (EP) — People on the Maluku Islands of Indonesia celebrated a new step toward peace as the Indonesian government lifted the civil emergency status in the region.

The emergency status was put in place in June 2002 in response to a spate of attacks by Muslim militants of the Laskar Jihad. The government also wanted to stop the influx of foreigners joining the Muslim ranks in attacking both Christian and Muslim natives of the islands. The lifting of the emergency status took place at the inauguration of the newly-elected Governor, Karel Albert Ralalahu, on Sept. 15.

According to Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW) the civil emergency status made it virtually impossible for foreigners and journalists to travel to the Maluku. However, it did allow local security officials to keep a tighter control on people arriving in the region and to respond rapidly to vio-

lent incidents. The improved security made it possible for local Muslim and Christian leaders to focus on reconciliation efforts. CSW reports that the situation has been steadily

improving. In the last few months, there have been only a few minor incidents which can be attributed to the small number of militants still in the area.

Laskar Jihad fighters invaded the Maluku Islands in 1999 on

what the terrorist organization described as a mission to protect local Muslims from Christian attacks. However, the group led a reign of terror that lasted for nearly three years and cost over 10,000 lives. Now, Christian leaders on the islands are heralding a new era of peace there.

Jacky Manuputty, director of the Interfaith Council of the Maluku, told CSW, "This is the right moment to enjoy freedom from fear and to establish law and order. It is our opportunity to restore tolerance, trust and peace and to learn to forgive each other."

## Grenade attack targets archbishop

Colombia (Compass) — On August 22, two men on motorcycles tossed a grenade at the home of Medellin's archbishop, a mediator in peace talks between the government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). Monsignor Alberto Giraldo was not at home at the time of the attack, which seriously injured two police officers providing security at the bishop's residence.

No one has claimed responsibility for the attack. Giraldo, a former president of the Colombian Episcopal Conference who mediated peace talks between former president Andrés Pastrana and FARC leaders, was attending a meeting of Colombian bishops in the northeast city of Valledupar at the time of the attack.

The same night, gunmen shot two journalists from Manantial Stereo, a radio station affiliated with the Roman Catholic Diocese of Putumayo, when they failed to stop at a FARC roadblock while traveling from Mocoa to Puerto Asís. Juan Carlos Benavides was killed and Jaime Conrado was wounded in the attack.



## Theology

## Digging holes in heaven



H. DER NEDERLANDEN AFTER VAN GOGH

## Harry der Nederlanden

A new book about heaven begins by telling us that, whatever else we say about heaven, we ought to say that heaven is fun. But Reformed theologians writing about heaven don't begin by talking about fun. Fun is for Catholics and other people who don't take religion seriously. Fun makes you think of carnivals and letting your hair down, casting off all restraints like people do during Mardi gras down in St. Louis.

I don't have many memories of my early childhood in the Netherlands, but I do remember looking out of my second-story bedroom window after dark at the lights and bustle of a carnival across the canal and listening to the music and the joyful shouts of children. When my mother caught me at it and tucked me back in bed, I asked her if we couldn't go across the canal and join the fun.

She explained about this weird thing Catholics did before Lent and that we Reformed folk didn't do anything that silly.

Lying in bed thinking it over, I thought it didn't sound that silly to me. I'd gladly give up, say, spinach or brussels sprouts during Lent for a chance to go to the carnival.

But at that time we Reformed folk wouldn't have anything to do with Lent. Catholics had a monopoly on it.

My mother was friends with a Catholic lady who came to our house every week to do a few hours of sewing. As she sat at the sewing machine the next day, I examined her closely to see whether she looked different from us, but I detected no signs of debauchery.

Catholics had suddenly become exotic creatures to me. They had a God who liked carnivals.

The God I was raised with wasn't the stern killjoy some ascribe to Calvinism, but he was a God who demanded "eerbied" – solemn respect, reverence. You walked quietly and whispered, so he wouldn't notice you. I wasn't at all sure he'd be pleased with all those screaming, hollering, laughing kids and the loud carnie music and the flashing, spinning lights.

The next night, I crept out of bed to take another long, lingering look.

I pretended I was God. No, all that noisy exuberance was something that had to be nipped in the bud, like mom did whenever we kids got out of control. In a little, crowded country like the Netherlands, kids couldn't be allowed to go bonkers. Next thing the neighbors would be banging on the wall and shouting.

I wagged my finger at all the merry-makers across the black canal, dark as the river styx. It suddenly sparkled with thousands of colored lights reflected from the carnival as a passing barge rippled the water.

The next evening, when bedtime approached, my father took me by the hand and we walked along the cobblestone street beside the canal where I could get a better look at the rides and where the music and sounds enveloped us.

I tugged my father's hand. He looked down at me and then looked back toward the house. The only windows that looked down on us and the carnival were dark. My father looked down at me and grinned. A few minutes later we were strolling through the carnival, soaking up all the sights and sounds.

That laid the foundation of my ecumenical outlook. Catholics might be heretics, I thought, but if they disappeared, so would the carnivals, and I didn't want that.

That night before I went to sleep, I prayed God not to wipe out the Catholics.

In one of his books, Richard Mouw, president of Fuller Seminary, suggests that perhaps Las Vegas should not be seen merely as sin city, a contemporary Sodom and Gomorrah, but as the expression of an (American) quest for the City of God. Certainly it has as much color and glitter as the city of gold, jewels and diamonds described in Revelation. The latter reminds me of a pirate's treasure chest.

It's far too gaudy for my tastes. I've absorbed a bit of the Marxist contempt for the luxuries of the rich. My visions of heaven don't include streets of gold, palaces studded with rubies or flashing neon lights that pander to the idle rich.

Whenever anyone attempts to describe heaven, I'm reminded of the vision of heaven given by a Dutch farmhand and quoted by K. Schilder: "To spade all day without getting tired."

When our pastor quoted this saying, he did it in the original language – Dutch. In Dutch the word for "spading" is "spitten." So, of course, being good calvinist kids, we repeated our lesson well.

"What is heaven?" Bennie would ask. "Spitting without getting tired!" we would whoop.

The saying – not the spitting but the digging – makes me think of the drawings by Van Gogh of Dutch farmers turning over the soil with a shovel to plant a new crop of tulips. Van Gogh's drawings convey the wear and tear on

the body and the drudgery of the labor, but also the simple nobility. There he is – bent toward the earth for eternity. But in Schilder's quote, he straightens up, stretches, looks out over the field and the work he has accomplished with satisfaction, nods toward heaven, and goes on with his digging. Color him happy.

Few of us would envision heaven in such earthy, bodily terms. But I know a fellow called Herman who has been retired for some years now and is bothered by constant back pain. He could identify with Schilder's summary of heaven – to dig without getting tired or grabbing your back in pain.

In fact, Herman told me he used to love digging. Once, standing in his back yard, he pointed out to me where he'd buried an old refrigerator that had broken down. That made me grin. Then he pointed to where he'd buried an old stove. And I chuckled. An old freezer. And I laughed out loud.

When he went on to talk about an upright piano he had buried, however, my laughter became uneasy. And I studied him out of the corner of my eyes. What else had he buried out there, I wondered.

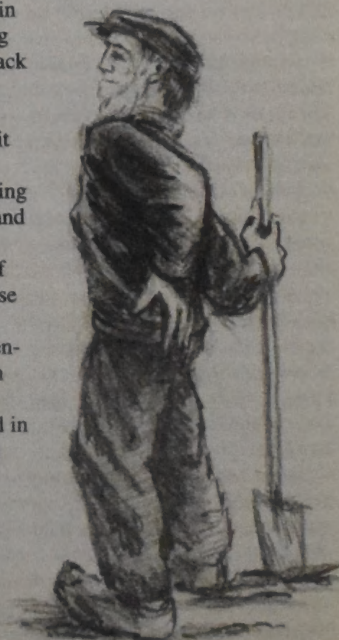
For Herman heaven is probably a limitless back yard, a sharp, shiny shovel, and lots of broken-down appliances to bury. Or, with limitless time and energy on his hands, maybe he'd graduate to burying old Cadillacs from the late '50s, you know – the ones with the huge fins. If he took on the task of burying old Sherman tanks and missile launchers, I'd gladly pitch in.

There's all kinds of stuff that will have to be buried in the new heaven and the new earth.

One year I spent all my spare time digging around my house way down to the foundation with a shovel and an adze to keep the water out of my basement. It took so long, my neighbors were beginning to shake their heads and call me Noah. When it was all done, I missed the simple directness of the work. Down deep all of us Calvinists are really laborers. We're much more comfortable with a shovel than with a flute or a paint brush.

Yes, when I get to heaven, I just may join my friend burying big bulky things in his back yard.

Of course, we'd probably have to do it at night, when the Catholics are whooping it up at the carnival and Richard Mouw is enjoying the lights of the casinos. Otherwise we might upset the hard-core environmentalists. Some of them think the only thing that should be buried in the ground is human beings.



H. DER NEDERLANDEN AFTER K. SCHILDER



## Connections

## The chilling dance of connection

*Not guilty, dad sobs six times...*

*He killed his six children before he set home on fire...*

*My miserable life with the angry man who killed my children...*

These were the horrific front-page headlines in the local morning paper for three days in a row as the reporter covered the trial of Jay Handel who stands accused of killing his six children and setting his home on fire on the morning of March 11, 2002, in Quatsino, a tiny community on the northern tip of Vancouver Island. At the same time, he was unsuccessful in his own suicide attempt. The newspaper also again published a photo of Sonya Handel holding her Bible at the memorial service a few days after the family tragedy. She had written, "Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" on the cover. We hope the verse was of comfort to her in her unspeakable sorrow.

## Loss of connection

The trial makes clear "crimes of passion" depict our human brokenness to the extreme. Jay and Sonya Handel's marriage was troubled and complicated by unhappy family legacies, uncontrolled anger, financial difficulties and mood and personality problems. Still, they remained together for over a decade and had six children "who seemed happy and content to outsiders."

Sonya Handel enjoyed going to church but the family was isolated.

At the time of the tragedy the Handel's were separated and while Jay pressed for reconciliation "on his terms" Sonya wanted a divorce. Consequently, Jay felt he had "nothing to live for."

## The need for attachments

Susan M. Johnson in *Creating Connection: The Practice of Emotionally Focused Marital Therapy* writes that seeking and maintaining attachments with others is a primary motivating principle of human behavior. If successful, it makes life worth living. She also notes some dependency upon one another is *normal* in adulthood and the presence of an attachment figure provides comfort and security. Positive attachments create a *secure* base or a safe haven from which we can grow and develop both as children and as adults. None of this is new for Christians.

This need for attachment was creatively and amusingly depicted in the film *Castaway* some years ago in which Tom Hanks was marooned on an island. To manage his feelings of fear in relationship to his sense of isolation and abandonment he created a "companion" by making a face on a volleyball found among the debris from the airplane crash. He gave it a name and the "face" became his attachment figure and recipient of Hanks many monologues.

## Four styles of adult attachments

There are four different styles of adult attachment we tend to adopt. They have been identified as: secure, anxious, avoidant fearful, and avoidant dismissing. The question all styles ultimately have to answer is: "Can I count on my spouse to be available and responsive when needed?"

In the *secure* style we view ourselves as basically lovable and others are viewed as mostly reliable and responsive. Expectations are therefore positive and we readily develop trust and closeness. In the *anxious* style there is uncertainty as to the lovable-ness of us and the legitimacy of our attachment needs, which makes our feelings of being able to depend on others uncertain and unsafe. In the *avoidance* styles there is a distrust of others and a need to limit any dependency on them.

## Know our style and keeping ourselves safe

The attachment style we adopt depends upon our past experiences especially in relationship to our family of origin. The underlying motive is to have our needs met and to keep ourselves emotionally safe. This, then, sets the tone for our present relationship with our spouse. If we had trusting relationships in the past and we trust our spouse, we will communicate clearly. If there has been no trust in previous rela-

tionships we will hesitate to open ourselves up and risk rejection.

While most couples who come for therapy think they need simple communication counseling, the reality of long term relationship difficulties is often rooted in the attachment style they have adopted. For instance, should a spouse subscribe to one of the avoidant styles, he or she would probably *not risk seeking or giving support when they or their spouse becomes anxious, even though that is what they need most!* By choosing this stance they are setting themselves up for alienation, resentment and anger. Consequently, long-term marital difficulties are best addressed with the help of an experienced relationship counselor.

In a nutshell, if we would open the "relationship toolbox" written about last month, we may want to dig for the "relationship smart" tool this time. The role of attachments in marital relationships is subtle and complicated and we need to understand how it influences the way we relate to one another. A surprise bonus of learning about our attachment style is that it often parallels the one we have with God! Combining spiritual and emotional growth will no doubt help us navigate the troublesome marital waters in more joyful and helpful ways.

Arlene Van Hove is a psychotherapist with Cascade Christian Counselling Association in Surrey, B.C.

## An unexpected Thanksgiving gift

by Lisa M. Petsche

*"God's blessings steal into life noiselessly."*

Henry Ward Beecher

One fall Friday evening three years ago, on our way to the cottage, my family discovered a wonderful new candy store when we stopped for a stretch break at a highway strip mall.

I subsequently wrote a slice-of-life vignette about our experience: how the store contained hundreds of varieties of sweets, many of them hard to find; how poring over the selection revived special memories of childhood treats; and how nice the owner was to my family, who had arrived moments before closing time. I submitted the piece to my local newspaper, and it was published a short time later in a first-person column to which I regularly contributed.

Since we weren't expecting to head north again soon, I mailed the owner a clipping, along with a brief note. Then I forgot about it.

Two weeks later, just before dinner, my husband ceremoniously placed in my arms a sizable cardboard carton weighing at least ten pounds. It had been delivered by courier.

Puzzled, I quickly opened the box to discover dozens of varieties of sweets.

It was a miniature candy store in a box. Every item I had mentioned in my article was there, plus many others.

Even more amazing, though, was the enclosed handwritten letter from Rita, the candy shop's owner.

She eloquently wrote about how, on the Friday afternoon following publication of my article (of which she'd been unaware), customers began arriving in much greater numbers than usual. This continued on Saturday.

At one point every person who walked into the store over a four-hour period mentioned my newspaper vignette as the reason for their being there. Rita likened it to the movie, *Groundhog Day*.

Many of these first-timers had the article in hand. Knowing the store was outside the newspaper's circulation area, several offered up their original or a photocopy. Many more who didn't have the article with them offered to mail it when they returned home. (By the time she wrote the letter, Rita had more than a dozen copies.) She and her staff were overwhelmed.

The heightened traffic flow repeated it-

self on the Thanksgiving weekend. Although it was traditional cottage closing time, a number of patrons indicated they would continue to travel north during the winter and looked forward to stopping in again.

Rita had been worried about the store's first winter, anticipating that northbound travelers — and therefore customers — would be relatively few. The surprise publicity and increased business resulting from the candy store vignette gave her reason to be optimistic.

And so she continued to expand her selection of treats — to more than 900 varieties by the end of that first year.

Meanwhile, Rita had to order extra stock to maintain her supply of humbugs and other candies I had singled out in the article. The increase in sales helped offset some of her initial start-up costs. (Today the store is flourishing; its variety of sweets now numbers in the thousands, and there's a web site with online, international ordering.)

Little did I know when I penned the candy store vignette that it would have such an impact. I was simply writing an anecdote about a memorable family experience, aiming to entertain rather than inform. I in-

cluded the shop's location as an afterthought.

The unexpected feedback boosted my confidence as a freelance journalist, and gave me a renewed appreciation of — and excitement about — the power of the written word. It was gratifying to realize that, however inadvertently, I was able, through my writing, to help the owner of a fledgling business.

That she took the time and effort to let me know this, and to thank me in such a big way, was truly heart-warming. Moreover, Rita thoughtfully passed along customers' positive comments about my newspaper articles.

I was moved to tears by the time I finished the last paragraph. Only then did I realize that the date on her letter was Thanksgiving Day.

What a wonderful Thanksgiving gift the candy store vignette turned out to be for both of us.

It also served as a powerful reminder that seemingly small endeavors can have a big impact. You just never know when, or how.

Lisa M. Petsche is a mother of three and freelance writer.

## GETTING UNSTUCK

Arlene Van Hove





## Reflections

## Second Coat

Ron DeBoer

I think I've painted this section of the door over six times now, lost in thought.

It's my daughter's door, the last of the summer painting assignment I got from the Big Boss after school finished in June. I've painted 17 doors, a half a kilometer of trim and every wall and ceiling in the basement.

But it's at this last door, Steph's, the eldest, where I stand and contemplate the future and reflect on the past.

She's fourteen and about to enter high school. She's both excited and scared about that. She can't wait to meet her friends at McDonald's at the end of the first day, and at the same time she wishes she could just stay home from school and play with her sisters in the back yard. She's already thinking about a career in sports medicine, all the while planning a sleep-over in the tent with her stuffed animals.

Fourteen. It's hard to believe fourteen years have raced by since the wrinkly little prune-face came home from the hospital. It's hard to believe something so red and veiny and pinched could grow into something so strong and confident and beautiful.

Like Steph, the walls of this bedroom have changed over the years, too. First her own art work was taped there — pictures of me with two lines for a body and an egg-shaped head with a smiley face. Then came the birthday party pictures of her friends standing around the table, smiling cherubically into the camera. The horse phase saw an entire calendar worth of stallions and colts on the back of her door and all over her walls. Now WNBA basketball action shots of Stacey Dales and Steve Nash and her favorite musical artists are hung at careful angles throughout her sanctuary.

Her room is the dichotomy of what it is to be fourteen. There is lipstick on her dresser and a teddy bear on her pillow; there is a bottle of Clearasil in front of her mirror and beside that her Winnie the Pooh electric toothbrush, which she insists on taking back and forth from her bedroom to bathroom for fear someone might *touch* it. Whenever we assume she is too old for something — like going out for Halloween or getting a Christmas stocking — she gasps open-mouthed at our ignorance. Whenever we assume she'll want to go with the family for a fun day at the beach, she rolls her eyes at the idea and announces she just wants to stay in her room.

## Sigh. Fourteen.

Her room is usually off limits to anyone with a last name DeBoer, but today I get a rare glimpse while pretending to paint her door, and it strikes me that the painting metaphor is an apt one to describe what it is to watch your daughter crawl, waddle, run then walk coolly through your house. You spend most of your time prepping a



door — chipping, sanding, washing and priming — before actually painting. Once you've applied a coat or two of good paint, you just have to let the door be a door.

So it is with your kids. You teach them morals, you do devotions and pray and teach a spiritual life, you expose them to as many sports and musical instruments as you can, you read to them, you buy them good books to read, you model patience, justice and love...and then there comes a time when you've got to let the teen be a teen.

She's going to go out and live her life, and if we've done a decent job prepping what's underneath what the world sees, hopefully she won't peel and chip easily under the strains and temptations that will seek her out in the world.

This summer, we took the girls to Disneyland for a week of theme parks — Magic Kingdom, Islands of Adventure and Universal Studios. We marveled at the cohesiveness the summer holiday brings to our kids as they — all four of them — ran off together to ride a roller coaster or excitedly look for each other's names on souvenir mugs in the Dr. Seuss store.

Steph didn't care that her hair was plastered to her forehead after coming down Splash Mountain, nor did she care what people might think of her wearing her bathing suit top inside a café as we sat out a mid afternoon thunderstorm. She screamed unbridled on the Space Mountain roller coaster and ran — unfettered by the self-imposed rule that teenagers should reserve emotion

and be cool — through the giant misters all around Disney. She watched with wonder as Tinker Bell climbed out of the Disney castle tower and streaked across the sky as fireworks exploded against an ink-black Florida sky. She asked me to take a picture of her beside the Man In the Yellow Hat in the Curious George park and smiled sincerely — not an ounce of insincerity in her — back at the camera.

## Clash of cultures

But then, as life's funny little ironies have a way of popping up at the most surprisingly inopportune moments, what should we hear as we headed toward the Spider-Man virtual reality show on the third day of our vacation, but Steph's name being called out from amidst the throngs of people at the Universal studios theme park. "Steph, Steeeeeph!"

We turned around to see one of her classmates, Kelsey, running toward Steph with her arms wide open. They screeched and danced in circles then talked over each other for a few minutes, all the while both sets of parents smiled politely at one another, both thinking the same thing: *so much for our family holiday*. Here we were, 2000 kilometers from home, rubbing shoulders with probably a quarter of a million other patrons at Universal Studios who had raced through the front gates earlier that morning; and we run into a kid who lives two blocks away from our house.

Even after Kelsey had waved goodbye and disappeared into the crowds with her parents — we never saw her again that week — Steph changed. She instantly took on that impatient, eye rolling response in family dialogues and that

sarcastic lilt crept back into her voice when she interacted with her sisters. She was preoccupied with that teen-seeking missile called the peer group that had found us, and kept saying, "I wonder where Kelsey is right now?" or "Wouldn't it be amazing if we ran into Kelsey again?" She kept her eyes peeled should her friend show up again and carefully distanced herself from any vulnerable interaction with her parents or sisters should her friend come into range again.

Karen tells me teenage girls hate it when their two worlds of family and peer group clash. I remember when the six of us went out to a movie last winter and ran into four of Steph's friends while standing at the concession stand. When I, munching on popcorn, later said, "That's wild we ran into



## Reflections

your friends," I got a grunt from Steph and a dirty look from Karen. Later she filled me in on the complexity that a chance ten second meeting in the lobby of the local Cineplex meant. It meant not only that Steph had the audacity to go with her family somewhere, but it also meant that four of her friends had arranged to go to the movies and hadn't invited her. It was the stuff that broke friendships.

Having worked with teens for many years, I like to think I've been a bit prepared for this beast called the teenage girl.

Yeah right! I think many parents share my thinking. She begs you to teach her how to dive properly in her grandparents' pool and later allows you to kneel beside her in the spare bedroom and pray with her about very private things. And just when you think you've got her figured out, she freaks out when, as you drive home from said grandparents, you ask for clarification on a question she's "sort of" asked about what you're doing later that night. When you state your displeasure at her attitude, she suddenly shuts down, stomps out of the van and when we get home, disappears to her bedroom and cranks her music as loud as the dial will allow with her favorite girl-band CD.

Thankfully, it's a Christian CD, which diminishes the impact significantly. It's difficult to be intimidated by the blaring chorus of "Our God Reigns" from the nether regions of your house.

Again, Karen, eternally wise, explained to me that a question about what I'm doing later that night *really* means that Steph wants me to take her to Zellers to look for school supplies, which she's anxious about because she's about to enter high school for the first time and she's worried her pencil case won't fit in with all the other pencil cases that will be attending her school in September.

Oh. How absolutely ignorant of me.

I remember clearly my first day of high school. Sporting a brand new pair of blue rugby pants and REO Speedwagon concert shirt, I slid my arms through the handles of my beige ADIDAS gym bag, hopped on my three-speed bike and raced the length of Queen street to Chatham Christian High. I was a new kid and I was nervous.

My family had moved to Chatham from the farmlands of northern Ontario.

I was assigned a locker, given a schedule and herded to the gymnasium with all the other high school rookies for the opening assembly. There the principal trotted out his year-opening speech, something about new beginnings and opportunities, followed by a list of rules and expectations.

Not knowing a soul, I identified the kids who looked like the power-brokers in grade nine, and did what every sensible teenage boy does when he's looking to get accepted with the guys: I started smoking, swearing and laughing at anything that didn't subscribe to the peer group's definition of normal. It took me nearly three years to break out of the trance that my particular peer group held over me.

My parents and teachers waited patiently for me to come out the other side of the adolescent tunnel, and when I did, not coincidentally, it was with a girl named Karen, who began setting me straight in our final year of high school.

Steph is my antithesis, however. She has ordered a sweatshirt with *Christian Girl* written across the chest. She will be praying by the flagpole later this fall with fellow Christians in her school and plans to join the Christian fellowship club, along with every sports team available to her. Her confidence and good sense humbles me; it underlines how much of a knucklehead I was as a teenage boy.

So, here I stand on the eve of a new school year. I've rolled on so many coats of paint this door won't have to be painted again until the grandkids start high school.

Steph has squeezed past me and is now sitting on the edge of her bed with all her school supplies spread out on her comforter. She begins putting them in her pencil case and knapsack.

I sense I am about to be evicted from her inner sanctum, but then she looks up and says, "I don't want summer to be over."

Karen would probably say that that simple statement is loaded with meaning, but I don't ask for clarification nor do I ponder its deeper implication.

I simply put down my paint brush and give her a hug.

## Life with Jack

Our wedding photo sits ornately framed on an end table in the living room. Jack remarked the other day that our twins are older now than we were the day that picture was taken. A sobering thought. Even more shocking is the fact that in a couple of weeks we hope to celebrate 25 years of marriage. I remember when silver wedding anniversaries were for old people.

We met in October 1977 and married a year later. My girls asked me recently how I knew so quickly that Jack was "the one." I couldn't come up with a really profound answer for them. Generally I'm the type to calculate all decisions from every conceivable angle and then reconsider some more. At the time I loved my job, was taking courses to advance myself, and truly enjoyed the single life. Then along came this good-looking Dutchman and all I knew was that wherever he was, I wanted to be with him. Forever. I still feel that way.



I must admit, though, the transition from single life to marriage proved challenging. Acquiring a husband was one thing. Leaving the Hamilton area to live on a farm was quite another. Harriston is picturesque in the summer, with its gently rolling hinterland and rustic country roads. In the winter it's a barren wilderness. I remember unpacking wedding gifts and staring out the window while snow blew across our front field. Even the neighbor's catlike looked cold. I had only a part-time job, my friends and family were all in the Niagara peninsula, and the nearest shopping mall was at least an hour's drive.

Not that it mattered. We didn't have money for trips to the shopping mall anyway.

I was homesick beyond belief. One time my mother called and mentioned that my wedding gown was ready at the dry cleaners. I took off that afternoon to go and pick it up. (It was a 2 hour drive, one way.) It's not like I needed the dress anytime soon. I just wanted to visit my mother.

I should confess that I tested Jack's love for me on several occasions during our first year as man and wife. I remember one of our worst arguments ever was over him taking the last of the milk and then putting the empty container back in the fridge.

Gradually God worked it all out. A full-time job at the local nursing home connected me to many townfolk. Pretty much all of Harriston had a relative who either lived or worked there. I adjusted to

farm life and came to appreciate the fact that my husband was always around. When James and Stephanie were born I learned the real beauty of living in a rural community. The whole township seemed excited about our big news, even before the babies and I had returned from the hospital in London. The place I once viewed as the middle of nowhere now became the centre of my universe. Raising our three children on the farm has been a special blessing (although my youngest, Jessica, who considers us all "hicks," might beg to differ).

These days Jack and I still have many lively discussions, but we seldom argue over anything. One thing about farming — you spend a lot of time together, for better or for worse. Stephanie once observed that Jack and I are capable of communicating across a crowded room, without any words whatsoever. Little irritations like sock lint on the bedroom floor no longer trouble me. From time to time I exact my revenge with strategies like feeding him brown beans before he has an evening meeting, or deliberately handing him the calls from telemarketers.

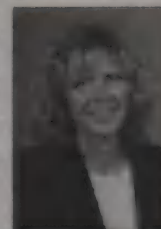
While we get along fabulously, there are still things about Jack that baffle me. How come he can put up with the noise of a chainsaw all day, but the sound of the vacuum cleaner is intolerable after 3 minutes? How is it possible that someone who can design and build a hydraulic lift wagon from the ground up can't figure out how to replace the toilet paper roll? What does he actually



hear when I say the words, "Put your wet towels in the hamper"? No doubt Jack has his own list of things that make him wonder about me, but hey, I'm the one with the column.

We start most days with a cup of coffee and a time of devotion. When I look across the living room I see the man who still laughs at my jokes, holds me when I cry, and cares about everything I really care about. I can't think of anyone I'd rather spend the next 25 years with.

Heidi VanderSlikke lives in Harriston, Ont. Her email: hmvanderslikke@hotmail.com





## Christian Living

# Healthy Pastors for Stronger Churches

Rachel Boehm Van Harmelen

When the Christian Reformed Church North America (CRCNA) was awarded a Lilly Endowment grant of nearly \$2 million in September 2002, the funding provided the momentum for an initiative with the potential to transform local churches and their pastors through "Sustaining Pastoral Excellence." The program promotes and teaches pastoral excellence through the establishment of mentoring relationships, peer learning opportunities, accountability groups, and various regional continuing education opportunities.

## Increasing Complexity

The increasing complexity of a pastor's role today has made programs such as this one more important than in the past. "Ministry is more and more complicated today, and thus more demanding," says Rev. Ron Peterson, Administrator of the Pastoral Residency Program at Church of the Servant, a Christian Reformed congregation in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Rev. Henry Gunnink of Kanata Community CRC, Kanata, Ontario, agrees. "Churches are expecting more today," says Gunnink. "It seems a number of years ago the expectations were more pulpit-centered. You taught catechism and made the visits. Today the expectations are more toward training. You are expected to administer. You are expected to be innovative and creative, and there's the expectation that you're going to make the church grow."

With the increasing complexity of the job comes higher levels of stress and even career burnout for pastors. One of the goals of Sustaining Pastoral Excellence is to provide resources to local pastors and churches, nurturing healthy pastors — and therefore healthier, stronger congregations — throughout the denomination.

## Learning from Each Other

Seminary simply cannot prepare pastors for everything they will face in their ministry, and there is little doubt that healthy pastors are those who keep on learning throughout their lifetimes. "When we came out of seminary, we had some basic tools but no experience," says Rev. Henry Wildeboer, Regional Director for Home Missions for Central and Eastern Canada.

For this reason, Sustaining Pastoral Excellence provides funding

for peer learning groups made up of local pastors who meet regularly for formal or informal education and accountability. "The peer learning that the Lilly Endowment grant has made possible is a very good thing because it provides pastors a forum where they learn from each other and especially benefit from each other's journey and experiences," says Wildeboer, who works with established churches to encourage such initiatives. "The peer learning groups I am part of are made up of about eight pastors and meet monthly for about three or four hours. We have a retreat at the beginning of the year in which we set some goals. We structure various reading assignments and plan ministry with mutual accountability."

## Continuing Education

Continuing education opportunities are structured differently, Wildeboer explains. "Some meet only short-term for one or two retreats to cover particular topics, for which the Lilly Endowment provides crucial funding. The grants assist with costs of materials, speakers, the retreat and some travel. They are making possible what otherwise would not be available to many pastors. This is a great thing."

As a regional pastor for Christian Reformed Churches in Classis Eastern Canada, one of Rev. Henry Gunnink's responsibilities has been to encourage pastoral support within the congregations in his region. "When I saw the information come out about Sustaining Pastoral Excellence, I took it upon myself to circulate the brochure among my colleagues, and the feedback was good." Gunnink and a group of local pastors worked with an Ottawa, Ontario, based Christian counseling group to develop a proposal for Sustaining Pastoral Excellence, and their proposed educational program has received crucial funding thanks to the Lilly Endowment grant.

"The counselors will cover 12 different topics for our group, based on a survey that identified the needs of these pastors and their spouses," says Gunnink. "From September to May, we will meet about every six weeks to attend sessions led by professional counselors, dealing with topics such as marriage counseling, pastoral pain, and prayer and the Holy Spirit — among others."

Pastors can contribute much to the health of their ministry, but

they cannot do it alone. Pastors and churches need to work together to develop a healthy ministry, says Gunnink. "There need to be good relationships, acceptance and communication in which everyone sees each other as part of the body of Christ, each with his or her unique gifts from God. There needs to be evaluation, speaking the truth in love and acceptance. Pastors need encouragement for training, and identification of areas where improvement may be needed."

Churches should encourage their pastors to take advantage of continuing education opportunities — whether formal or informal, says Wildeboer. "Pastors should be encouraged to take a course, even informally via the Web or in seminary or university settings. Even setting aside time for good reading or guided reading can work well. Sabbaticals for pastors serving a congregation six years or longer are healthy for pastor and church. These could be six months or they could even be a two- or three-month period set aside with a specific focus on training in a particular area."

Accountability for pastors is also a shared pastoral-congregational responsibility, says Rev. Ron Peterson. "Pastors should have two or three people whom they and the congregation respect to meet with periodically for support, to pray together and assess how things are going," Peterson says. "Honesty, confidentiality, and trust are key here."

## A Valuable Resource

Peterson values the Sustaining Pastoral Excellence (SPE) program because it offers resources to pastors and congregations that simply would not be available in the CRC. "SPE provides resources that pastors and churches might not otherwise see or seek and the opportunities and funds to get pastors together to think, talk, pray, be still and learn," Peterson says.

"Resources like SPE are all for the good," concludes Peterson. "Healthy pastors cannot be lone rangers; ministry needs collaboration, networking, mutual support, encouragement and learning."

"The outcomes will bear long-lasting fruit for the Christian Reformed Church and its local congregations," says Wildeboer. "I think we will see longer-term pastors, healthier pastors and happier churches as a result of this initiative," he says.



## SUSTAINING Pastoral EXCELLENCE

*Sustaining Pastoral Excellence is a Christian Reformed Church program to support and strengthen pastors—so they can help build vital congregations.*

Pastors are encouraged to submit proposals for peer learning groups.

Classes and organizations are encouraged to sponsor continuing education events for pastors.

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Made possible in the Christian Reformed Church through a grant from Lilly Endowment Inc.



## Christian Living

## Turning back to God

William L. Vander Beek

Three women are on a road, walking. Where are they going?

One is an older woman; her name is Naomi. The other two are younger: they are her two daughters-in-law, Orpah and Ruth. They have turned their backs on Moab and are on their way toward the land of Judah.

Of the three, only the older one is from Judah -- from Bethlehem, in fact. So she is going "back home." But the two younger ones? They hail from Moab, so they are going away from home.

If you could overhear what they are saying.... Well, isn't it remarkable -- the older woman repeatedly urges her daughters-in-law not to keep going with her, but to "turn back" to Moab, the country of their birth.

What is going on? Doesn't she like these young women?

No, she is not selfish in urging them to part company with her. She believes Orpah and Ruth have no future in Bethlehem. They may find bread in Bethlehem (it means "House of Bread") now that the famine is over, but not rest, that is, not a secure home, with a husband and children (vs 11).

As you know, Orpah does turn around to go back to Moab. But Ruth -- she persists in facing her future in Judah, with Naomi and, she makes it clear, with Naomi's God (vs 16,17).

Three women walking on the road. But one turns back. Only Ruth accompanies Naomi, no matter what. And that, in brief, is the story.

Underneath the surface of this story, there are big issues. While using variety in language usually improves writing, in chapter one of the book of Ruth the writer uses repetition to make his point. He uses the same verb "to return" 11 times in this one chapter (In vs 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 15 (2x), 16, 22 (2x). And then yet again in 2:6 and 4:3.)

Now, the remarkable thing is that the verb "return" ("go back") serves to cover both directions: returning to Moab, and also for returning to Bethlehem. As to returning to Bethlehem, strictly this is true only for Naomi. You can read the verses this way: that Naomi is always the subject, and Orpah and Ruth just go along with her. Yet, when vs 11 says that the three of them "set out on the road that would take them back to the land of Judah," you might logically object: "But Naomi is the only one

who is 'going back'!"

What if the author leaves some ambiguity on purpose? What if the basic issue of this first chapter is truly about going "back to God?" Isn't the story of Ruth a mission story?

Ruth turns to the God of Judah despite the fact that Naomi is such a poor evangelist for the Lord. After Orpah has gone back, Naomi pointedly understands the spiritual significance of that return: she says to Ruth (vs 15): "Your sister-in-law is going back to her people and to her gods." Nevertheless, she strongly urges Ruth to "go back with her." Ruth, however, "clings to" Naomi, and she commits herself fully also to "the Lord" (Yahweh), and suggests (see the NRSV) that "even death" will not part her from Naomi (vs 17).

A real conversion has taken place in the life of Ruth. That is why the last verse of the chapter, vs 22, is so full of meaning. Here the author uses the verb "return" twice more. It starts the same way as before: "So Naomi returned together with Ruth the Moabite, her daughter-in-law." But the next phrase has Ruth for its subject: it speaks of Ruth, "who came back with her from the country of Moab."

Campbell writes: "At the beginning it is Naomi who returns from the Moab plateau, but at the end it is Ruth." And, more cautiously, Hubbard writes: "If the present context is any clue, the author possibly said, 'Naomi's return meant a return for Ruth also'."

So, Ruth came "back to God." The broadcasting enterprise of the Reformed community is called the "Back to God Hour." Are outreach, evangelism and missions indeed a ministry of calling people back to God? Yes!

The human race turned away from God, its creator: they do not acknowledge that they are his offspring. And yet they cannot get away from him.

The apostle Paul makes this quite clear in his mission messages recorded in the book of Acts, most clearly in 17:30-33. He reminds the philosophers on Mars' hill in Athens that all humans spring "from one ancestor." And the Creator is also the one who gives to all humans "life and breath and all things." Deep down, all search for God. And it is on that basis that God now commands all people everywhere to repent for God is coming in judgment.

"Repent" is not quite the same verb as "return." Literally, the Greek word means "to turn toward." Yet, often the sentence will also say what a person is turning from. In Lystra (Acts 14) we hear Paul call out to the idolatrous crowd, "Turn away from these worthless things to the living God."

That is what conversion is: a full turn-around from idolatry, disobedience, unbelief, rebellion, toward the living God.

That is the Christian mission, as

Paul reminds the Thessalonian converts, "how you turned to God from idols, to serve a living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead -- Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath that is coming."

Such clear language is the language of God's love seeking to save all.

That is our task in the world: to call the lost to let themselves be found, as they respond in faith to the lovely call of the Savior.

It is well put in the Contempo-

rary Testimony of the Christian Reformed Church in par. 19, "Redemption" which states that "God has set out...to reclaim the lost as his people, and the world as his kingdom."

In his Name we call all peoples to return back to God.

*William L. Vander Beek is an active member of Immanuel CRC in Langley. He is a free-lance theologian, with a B.D. from Calvin Sem, a Th.M from Westminster Sem in Philadelphia, and some postgraduate years at the VU in A'dam. He is presently writing exegetical studies on the Epistle to the Hebrews.*

## Revival is in the air

By Tony Campolo

I recently engaged one of America's leading fundamentalist Christian leaders in a discussion about the spiritual direction of America. He made it abundantly clear that, in his opinion, our country was on the road to perdition and eventual destruction. I disagreed, and pointed out that there was growing evidence that the reverse was true.

Statistics gathered in recent studies indicate that America may actually be going through a period of spiritual and moral revival. Divorce rates have dropped dramatically. A recent *Newsweek* cover story reported that abstinence until marriage is an increasingly popular life choice among teenagers. In fact, 10% fewer teenagers are engaging in pre-marital sex than a decade ago. At the same time, the incidence of abortion is in startling decline. Recent studies on marital fidelity indicate that only 5% of married men committed adultery in the past year. There are still problems, of course, but overall it seems that Biblical morality is on the rebound.

## Evangelical successes

What is really encouraging to those of us who wonder about the effectiveness of churches and the relevance of religion is that social scientists attribute these positive trends in sexual behavioral patterns largely to the growing influence of spiritual commitments among Americans. Promise Keepers, an evangelical men's movement, has called millions of American men to recommit to their marriage vows and pursue lives of love and sexual fidelity. Likewise, "True Love Waits," the

abstinence program sponsored by the Southern Baptist Convention, has had a significant impact on the folkways of contemporary youth.

The collective success of these and other efforts is turning the cultural tide in spite of the seemingly endless assaults on Biblical morality that are coming at us through the media. Such positive signs of renewal are all the more amazing, considering the overtly sensual images that men, women, and especially young people face practically everywhere we look these days.

## Young people

Mainline churches may be losing their young people in record numbers, but there is no evidence that the younger generation is turned off to spirituality. On the contrary, every summer hundreds of thousands of teenagers pack Christian music festivals that make the grand camp meetings of bygone days seem very small by comparison. The Creation Festivals in Pennsylvania and Washington State draw more than 40,000 young people apiece for their three-day Christian extravaganzas. Organizations, such as Young Life and the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, sponsor thousands of evangelical clubs for high-schoolers across the nation, impacting huge numbers of students on a weekly basis. On college campuses, movements such as Campus Crusade and Intervarsity Christian Fellowship continue to thrive, even when they elicit negative reactions for those who criticize their aggressive styles of evangelism. It is truly amazing to discover how many young people are doing short-term missionary work in Third World countries.

## Mass revival meetings

The older generation is also getting on the religious bandwagon. The popularity of the gospel music events that my friend Bill Gaither has developed for middle-aged Christians has defied everyone's expectations. His annual "Praise Gathering" in Indianapolis regularly brings more than 15,000 participants, and he regularly sells out large arenas all over the country. Bill's "Homecoming Videos," which feature a mixture of old time hymns and newer southern gospel songs, have sold millions. Likewise, evangelists from Benny Hinn to T.D. Jakes pack out stadiums, night after night, while mega-churches seem to be sprouting up in every city and suburb in America.

I asked my fundamentalist friend how he could suggest that America was going down the tubes spiritually when evidence of spiritual revival is everywhere evident. It seemed to me that this pessimistic man was unwilling to believe that God is actually answering his prayers, and the prayers of so many others across America, for the moral renewal and spiritual regeneration of our nation. He could not accept the obvious: The winds of revival are beginning to blow across America.

*Tony Campolo is professor emeritus of Sociology at Eastern University St. Davids, PA. As founder of the Evangelical Association for the Promotion of Education (EAPE), he has helped to create, nurture and support programs for "at-risk" children in cities across the United States and Canada, and has helped establish schools and universities in several developing countries.*



## Home

## A divided love

Didy Prinzen

Two countries, the one in which I was born and the one in which I bore my children will always have to share my love. The one is small and lovely, the other one big and magnificent.

On summer nights, when I'm enjoying the breath-taking view of the hills and valleys of Canada from our deck, with the deep blue of Lake Ontario also visible in the distance, I often see a large silver bird winging its way towards the east. And just as often I find my thoughts traveling along, imagining it heading for the Netherlands, that small quaint country by the sea where I spent the first 20 years of my life. The loveliness of my native country stands out in my mind forever and has left an impression on it that the years could not erase.

I vividly remember the very first time I revisited it. When the plane was coming in for a landing and the land coming closer and closer, a vibrant color overcame all my other impressions. It was the color green, the color of this low land, of these "nether" lands, that never seem to fade, not even in winter.

It possesses a symmetrical beauty all its own, consisting for a large part of lush green meadows, separated by ditches as straight as rulers. And in these meadows often more than a hundred cows peacefully graze, each one artistically and uniquely designed by the great designer himself. I've never again seen cows as beautiful as the ones I saw in my youth in my native country. Sometimes, at night – and there were many such nights – fog would move over the low land and it would look as though those cows were legless and floating on a grey mysterious sea.

And on those foggy days the mournful, monotonous lowing of a fog-horn came across the dike that separated the North Sea from the land. I grew up with that sound and I can still hear it today. The sea and her elements were always close, with strong winds and rising waters, and sometimes it

seemed as if she were lurking to seize back the land that had been taken from her.

**Pastures, woods, castles**

There were many waterways in the land of my birth and we learned early to ride our bikes along the canals and ditches, skillfully maneuvering across rickety footbridges. The canals had been dug centuries ago for useful purposes and were still used as such when I lived there. Today, however, they serve mainly as recreational grounds for the many pleasure crafts. The hard-working Dutch having become an affluent people with lots of leisure time.

But I like to remember my native country the way it was when I lived there.

I loved the low green pastures where I lived. But I loved its forests too. They were not nearly as vast and dense as in this adopted country of mine but were much more accessible for walking and biking. And what was more exhilarating on a warm summer day than to walk or bike in a cool, semi-dark forest with the scent of warm pine needles all around and with sunlight filtering from above through a canopy of leaves?

In your walk you might come upon one of the old castles that were so plentiful in Holland – some of them dating back as far as the 11th century – standing there in all its grandeur, mirroring itself in the still waters of a moat that in medieval times served to keep enemies at bay.

And can I ever think of my birth country and not think of its flowers? There were flowers everywhere! They bloomed in abundance in the flower gardens in front of the houses, and the sparkling windows of the houses showed an exhibition of plants and flowers all their own, framed by the most beautiful curtains in the world. A symphony of color and fragrance also spilled out of the flower stalls in every town and city. Adding still more charm were the many century-old churches, wonders of architecture and silent witnesses of an immensely



rich history and culture.

There was much, much more! But words cannot describe the loveliness of that quaint little country that once was my home, nor can they do justice to my sentiments. Only someone who has lived there too will recognize them.

I greatly rejoice in the blessing of my memories. It is a beautiful thing to be able to relive one's past – the pleasures, the joys, the sorrows, yes, even the sorrows – time having taken away their intensity. And I find myself sometimes go back in time to draw strength from those memories. I go back to the quiet countryside, to rest my thoughts by the lush green meadows, and I walk again

the sun-filtered paths of my youth. And, greatest blessing of all, fragments of Dutch psalms come to my mind when I need them and I find out now how firmly also my faith was planted in "the faith of my fathers."

I love the country where I bore my children, but it has to share that love with the country where I was born. In the past I have often felt uprooted, an awareness of having been transplanted. However, I also know now that I never will feel totally at home in any one country. Not until I have been transplanted one more time....

*Didy Prinzen, who lives in Orono, Ontario, is a freelance writer and a longtime contributor to CC.*





## Opinion



## Mainly on Money

You have seen the signs. When you come in a china shop you are warned: "You break it, you bought it." The same applies to an occupier power. It is the responsibility of the victors not only to feed the vanquished, but also to repair the physical damage. Paul Bremer, the US commissar for Iraq, made this quite clear: he publicly requested tens of billions of dollars, without first clearing his remarks with the White House, showing his frustration with the slow pace of fulfilling that commitment.

How much money is needed for Iraq? Bush says \$87 billion. I beg to disagree. Here's why. The first Gulf War -1990-91- was a money maker for the USA. Japan came through with billions. This was when the land of the Rising Sun was still financially on top of the world. Now it is on the bottom with the largest budget deficit of any modern nation. Saudi Arabia and especially Kuwait also dug into their piggy banks and forked over the balance to pay for the 500,000 soldiers who cleared Kuwait of the Iraqi transgressor.

Operation Desert Storm cost about \$70 billion. C.O.D. Cash on Delivery. This time the USA went in alone, convinced that the subsequent sale of Iraqi oil would foot a much lower bill. Their reasoning: once a Blitzkrieg had toppled the Iraqis and the oilfields were secured, the pumping would begin and money would gush in. The only danger would be that the flood of new oil would depress the world market, but that too would benefit the American voter who finally could expect an unlimited stream of cheap gasoline, enabling them to drive their SUVs from here to eternity.

We now know that Iraq — with its shattered economy, devastated oil industry and plundered national wealth — is unable to reimburse the cost of the invasion and occupation.

So, how much is this experiment in nation-building going to cost the American taxpayer? First the preliminary expense. According to the Pentagon, the cost of preparation, aid to noncombatant allies and the invasion itself amounted to \$45 billion. For current expenses the Pentagon provided a — probably low — ballpark figure of a "billion dollars a week," representing the ongoing occupational cost since serious fighting stopped in May. Assuming a minimum of two years there, or  $104 \times \$1 \text{ billion} = \$104 \text{ billion}$ , for a total of \$150 billion. All these are borrowed funds as the USA now operates strictly on credit. Compounded interest at 5 percent comes to \$14 billion.

Add to this an estimated \$5 billion in initial humanitarian aid and \$8 billion in Iraqi government salaries, as well as about \$7 billion for repairs to public utilities and to restore vital services over the next two years and the preliminary total is \$138 billion.

As the legal owner of Iraq by conquest, the USA is responsible for Iraq's mountain

of foreign debt — roughly \$350 billion, consisting of \$90 billion, mostly for arms purchases from Russia, China, France and Germany, \$60 billion in pending contracts, and war reparations of \$200 billion for Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

Giving the creditors even 50 cents on the dollar, this still means that the USA is guarantor for \$180 billion.

Since there are always unexpected expenses, some \$20 billion ought to be set aside for this, for a total of \$338 billion.

All this still leaves Iraq in a mess. The USA, if it wants to establish a functioning democracy there — which, we are told, is its ultimate aim — it will have to rebuilt ports, farms, roads, telecommunications systems, power plants, hospitals and water works, as well as introducing a medical benefit plan, a national pension scheme, and new laws for foreign investment and intellectual property rights. The country needs a revised criminal code and judiciary set-up, new tax laws and collection apparatus, and an electoral voting procedure with appropriate technology. Using postwar American and United Nations estimates for these and many other tasks, the total bill for these hard and soft necessities is likely to be at least \$200 billion over a decade. Grand total \$538 billion.

A few weeks there was a 180 degree turn in U.S. policy. I imagine that somebody in the White House finally took out a calculator, punched in some numbers, added these to the historically high 5 year budget deficit of \$2.5 trillion, and told the President that they may have a slight financial problem — nothing that more tax cuts would cure — but, just in case, suggested to pass the hat to the very nations whom the USA had dismissed as irrelevant and lacking guts — and who also now have huge shortfalls.

Will the Rest of the World chip in? Not likely, as anti-American sentiment is at its highest level ever, thanks to its partisan support of Israel, the uncompromising attitude of the Washington administration toward global warming, and its post-war bungling in occupied Iraq.

### Hottest year ever

I looked at the British Weather Office web page, which projects the next 3 months' climate outlook for the entire world. The areas covered by orange and deep orange, indicating high temperatures, far outstrip the light and dark blue sections. Especially Africa and the Atlantic ocean seem to be on fire. This would mean that for the entire world 2003 will go down in history as the hottest year ever.

This year's 40 plus Celsius days in Europe have killed perhaps tens of thousands, especially in France. But more than people and animals have perished: glaciers too are giving up the ghost in record numbers. The excessive heat high up in the Alps are not the only culprit. A freak storm last winter

dumped dust from the Sahara on top of the white surface and gave the ice a grayish appearance that reduced reflection and increased the amount of sunlight absorbed, accelerating the meltdown. Result: a loss in glacier thickness four times the rate of the past two decades and ten times the average over the length of the 20th century.

In Canada we experience the spring runoff when melting snow, combined with spring rains, increases river flows. The same is true for the disappearing Alpine snow fields: during the summer they release a lot of water, this year so much that small lakes are created high up in the mountains which then suddenly break loose with devastating consequences for the villages below. Glaciers are more than for skiing: they also supply water for millions. Once they are gone, so are the streams they feed and the farms they irrigate. Already Europe's main rivers, the Rhine, the Rhone, the Danube, are at record lows due to extreme evaporation.

### Pinpricks

What made our 20th Century so prosperous was cheap energy, stable weather, abundant water, rapid population increase and economic growth. Please get used to the idea that these favorable conditions won't last. I believe that the heat in Europe, the power outage here, are but pinpricks compared to what is to come.

As we start afresh after the summer break, we, perhaps, see the real beginning of the new century, because there is something different going on. The author of the Jewish Bible book Ecclesiastes might say that 'there is nothing new under the sun,' but when he or she wrote those lines he or she did not know about the periodic disappearance of the ozone layer over the Antarctic, projected to the largest ever this year, nor could he/she even remotely imagine such an occurrence as global warming. Wickedness and evil is, I am sure, as widespread now as it was 2400 years ago when this wise book was written.

### Playing dice with the planet

Why so pessimistic? No, I am not a pessimist. I am a realist. For one thing gasoline — and natural gas prices are climbing, probably permanently. For another, our place in the natural world is not what it used to be: environmental change is so new and so dangerous, that we must stop it or perish. Thanks to low fuel prices we could afford big cars, huge houses, spread-out subdivisions, on the premise that cheap

energy would last forever. In reality we have been playing dice with the planet without having a clue about the rules of the game. We have been experimenting with the earth and her systems, without grasping the after effects.

Example: take that 3 months' projected weather report from the Brits, indicating hotter than usual conditions in Africa and the Atlantic. Water temperatures in the tropical Atlantic can grow warmer and warmer, but once the temperature goes over 26 degrees Celsius, a threshold is passed, a switch is thrown and hurricanes form. Expect some more, even nastier, hurricanes to develop this year. We don't know how fast global warming will be or its outcome. We don't know how the increase in forest fires everywhere will affect us. We don't know the threshold for the absorption of greenhouse gases caused by the greater use of fossil fuels. No one knows and no one will know until the results show and then it may be too late.

The domino effect in the recent power outage is a case in point. Perhaps the trigger was a minor event. Can a small rise in the temperature, in carbon dioxide absorbency, do the same to our climate, and throw the entire system out of whack and make it beyond repair? In fact, we are hard at work to test that possibility. Take China. In 1997, only 6 years ago, it had just 2 million cars. In 2004 its new car production alone will surpass that of France and be more than 4 million. It takes as much energy to produce a car as it will use in its life time. This year the world will have one billion automobiles, trucks and motorbikes, no cause to celebrate because all are spewing pollutants. One thing is sure: one billion combustion engines will cause more cancer, more new diseases, more pressure on our medical system, and may well trip something in the atmosphere that will prove irreversible.



Bert Hielema lived in St. Catharines, Ont. from 1955-75. From there he moved to Tweed in 1975, where he built an energy efficient house.



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A conversion is incomplete if it does not leave one with an intense social consciousness, if it does not fill one with a sense of overwhelming responsibility for the world. It has been said... truly that the Church exists for those outside of itself. The Church must never be in any sense a little huddle of pious people, shutting their doors against the world, lost in prayer and praise, connoisseurs of preaching and liturgy, busy mutually congratulating themselves on the excellence of their Christian experience.

... William Barclay, *In the Hands of God*

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## Classifieds

Classified Rates	Anniversaries	Obituaries
<p><b>DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION</b>  <i>Christian Courier</i> is published on alternate Mondays. Copy deadline for each issue is 9 a.m. Tuesday, 13 days prior to publication date.</p> <p><b>RATES</b> (GST added to all rates listed)  All personal and family announcements: \$16.00 per column inch (P.I.) (2" wide)  <b>rose@christiancourier.ca</b>  Display advertising re. businesses and organizations: \$18.20 P.I.  <b>ads@christiancourier.ca</b></p> <p><b>PHOTOS</b>  There is a processing fee of \$25 for the inclusion of a photograph with a personal or family announcement. Photo space is not charged P.I., but we reserve the right to determine published photo size. Please note that we cannot use a faxed photo. We need either an original photo (which we will return) or a downloadable internet image.</p> <p><b>PERSONAL ADS</b>  <i>Christian Courier</i> would be pleased to handle your personal ad in an efficient and discreet manner. The cost to set up a personal file under a unique file number is \$25. Ads requesting correspondence with this file are run at \$16 P.I. per insertion. All correspondence is immediately forwarded unopened.</p> <p><b>NEWLYWEDS &amp; NEW PARENTS</b>  We offer a \$25 one-year subscription to couples whose wedding is announced in <i>Christian Courier</i> and to parents who announce a child's birth in our paper. If you want to take advantage of this offer, please let us know when placing your ad.</p> <p><b>SUBMITTING YOUR AD</b>  Mail: <i>Christian Courier</i> 1 Hiscott St.  St. Catharines, ON L2R 1C7  fax: 905-682-8313 e-mail: see above</p> <p><b>OTHER INFORMATION</b>  a) <i>Christian Courier</i> reserves the right to print classifieds using our usual format and editing style.  b) Please provide us with clear copy. <i>Christian Courier</i> is not responsible for any errors due to hand written or phoned-in advertisements.</p>	<p>1953 November 10 2003  CRC Trenton, Ont. Oshawa Ont.</p> <p><b>OKKE AND NITA BOUMA (Optendrees)</b>  Their children: Ann &amp; Bert Langendyk  Roger &amp; Yvonne Bouma  Teresa &amp; Ron Buschman  Caroline &amp; Richard Morsink  and thirteen (+2) grandchildren  give thanks to God for Mom &amp; Dad,  Oma &amp; Pake and <b>50 years of Marriage</b>.</p> <p>Home address: 700 Wilson Rd N #306  Oshawa ON L1G 7T5</p> <p><b>Birthdays</b>  With thankfulness to God for his love and faithfulness, we hope to celebrate the <b>100th Birthday</b> of our father, grandfather &amp; great-grandfather</p> <p><b>Herman Storteboom</b>  on Oct. 16th.  Congratulations Dad from your children  Joan &amp; Philip Degans  Klaas &amp; Alice Storteboom  Gertie &amp; Henk Nyhoff  Ralph &amp; Vivian Storteboom  11 grandchildren  27 great-grandchildren</p> <p>You're invited to an <b>Open House</b> for this occasion on Saturday, Oct. 18th from 2 - 4 p.m. at Harmony Hall Holland Christian Homes 7900 McLaughlin Rd, Brampton  <b>Best Wishes only please.</b></p> <p>Correspondence: c/o K. Storteboom  Box 179, Belgrave ON N0G 1E0</p> <p>With joy and thanksgiving to God for His faithfulness, we announce the <b>80th Birthday</b> of our mother, grandmother and great-grandmother</p> <p><b>Grace Bruinsma</b>  on Sunday, October 5, 2003</p> <p>We thank the Lord for her firm confidence and joy in the faith and pray for His continued blessing in her life.</p> <p>Her grateful children &amp; grandchildren:  Diane &amp; Eddy VanMeeteren  Kristy &amp; Brian Alkema  Mike &amp; Aimee VanMeeteren  Andrea &amp; Mark VanderKruk  Teresa VanMeeteren &amp; Tim Kieft  Jessica  Lydia &amp; Willy Schulenberg  Marty  Cherie &amp; Pete Buikema  Jamie &amp; Michelle Schulenberg  Joni &amp; Craig Still  Hank &amp; Fiona Bruinsma  Janine  Charlene  Kay-leigh  Ryan  Stewart &amp; Dabbe Bruinsma  Stewart-Seth  Reece  Carla</p> <p><b>Open House Saturday Oct. 4, 2003</b>  from 3 - 5 p.m. at  Providence Christian Reformed Church, Beamsville, Ont.  <b>Best Wishes Only</b></p> <p>Home address: 4071 Hixon Street  Beamsville ON L0R1B7</p>	<p>Suddenly on Thursday, Sept. 4, 2003 the Lord in his wisdom took unto himself our dearly beloved mother, grandmother and great-grandmother</p> <p><b>MARGARETHA JONKER</b>  in her 91st year.</p> <p>Beloved wife of the late Garreit Jonker (1981).  Sadly missed by her children:  Ena &amp; John Van Rooyen, <i>Barrie</i>  Gus &amp; Tina Jonker, <i>St. Catharines</i>,  Tina &amp; Bill Goldin, <i>London</i>  Nicolette Jonker &amp; Mike Hryszko, <i>Toronto</i>  Vince &amp; Edwina Jonker, <i>Niagara-on-the-Lake</i>  Carla Jonker-Garrison &amp; Tim Garrison, <i>Brampton</i>  and 12 grandchildren and 13 great-grandchildren  Survived by one sister and two brothers in <i>The Netherlands</i>.  The funeral service was held on Sept. 8, 2003. Pastors J. Kuntz and W. Vanderwerf officiated.</p> <p>Correspondence: Gus Jonker, 20 Tracey Rd.  St. Catharines ON L2N 1P8</p> <p>"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this not from yourselves, It is the gift of God." Ephesians 2:8</p> <p>Suddenly on Aug. 31, 2003 the Lord called home our dear son-in-law and brother-in-law</p> <p><b>HENRY STIENSTRA</b>  at the age of 64.</p> <p>We pray that the Lord will surround Tina and her family with his comfort and love.  Mom &amp; Dad Bylsma, <i>Woodstock, Ont.</i>  Corrie Bergman (Jans [fl]), <i>Woodstock, Ont.</i>  Mike &amp; Betty Bylsma, <i>Woodstock, Ont.</i>  Florence &amp; Ben Olthoff, <i>London, Ont.</i></p> <p>Home Address: 4 Homestead Cres.  Chatham ON N7M 5B1</p> <p><b>ROELOF (Ralph) JACOB HUIZENGA</b></p> <p>After a character-filled struggle with cancer, Ralph Jacob Huizenga, passed away at the age of 77. He died at home while being taken care of by his family.</p> <p>Ralph was born in the Netherlands and immigrated to Alberta in 1951. At a later age he took his family to Sioux Center and graduated from Dordt College. He was a teacher at the Abbotsford Christian High School for 21 years.</p> <p>Beloved husband of: Jenny Huizenga-deJong.  Dear father of:  Annette &amp; Sjoerd Kalma-Huizenga, <i>the Netherlands</i>  Reina &amp; Jacques Anema, <i>Rosedale, BC</i>  Rolanda Huizenga &amp; Bill Lodewyk <i>Red Deer, AB</i>  Jacqueline &amp; Phil Buytendorp, <i>Ontario</i>  He was a proud grandfather of eight grandchildren.</p> <p>Ralph was the brother of:  Tiny Steenwijk, <i>Amhem</i>;  Nic &amp; Adeline Huizenga, <i>Aalsmeer</i>  Jaap &amp; Dicky Huizenga, <i>den Haag</i>  Reina and Jaap de Groot, <i>Gouda</i>  Brother-in-law to:  Hilda &amp; John Abma, <i>Edmonton</i>  Sharon deJong, <i>Rocky Mt. House</i>  Wes &amp; Hilda deJong, <i>Rocky Mt. House</i>  Ann Simonski, <i>Vernon</i></p> <p>I long to see this friend of mine  Sometimes, when life is o'er,  I want to shake his pierced hand  And say: "Thank you Lord,  I've never been alone." RJH</p> <p>A memorial service was held at  Living Hope CRC Church in Abbotsford on  Tuesday, Sept. 9, 2003 at 1:00 p.m.</p> <p>Correspondence: 34737 Arden Dr.  Abbotsford BC V2S 2X9</p>
<p><b>For Rent</b></p> <p><b>For Rent:</b>  2 bedroom house located 15 minutes west of <b>Peterborough</b> with detached garage. Call 905-723-3911 or email: ann0987@hotmail.com</p> <p>Needed: someone to share 3 bedroom house in <b>Guelph</b>, Christian young man, NS, ND. Available immediately. Call Brian at 519-822-4506 and leave a message.</p>	<p><b>Birthday</b></p> <p>Congratulations to</p> <p><b>Doreen Wouda</b>  on the occasion of her <b>90th Birthday</b>.</p> <p><b>Open House</b> will be held at the Pembroke Christian Reformed Church Fellowship Hall on Saturday, October 18th from 2 - 4 p.m.  <b>Best Wishes only</b></p> <p>Correspondence address:  145 Catharine St Apt 7  Pembroke ON K8A 1V3</p>	<p><b>Birthday</b></p> <p>Happy 90th Birthday!</p> <p>We plan to have a cake and coffee reception following the 10:00 AM morning service at Cephass Christian Reformed Church, 220 Goodfellow Rd Peterborough, Ont. on Sunday, October 19th, 2003.</p> <p>All are welcome.</p> <p><b>Trijntje Speyers-Pronk</b></p> <p>With joy and thankfulness to the Lord, we look forward to celebrating <b>Mom's 90th Birthday</b> on October 19th, 2003. We are grateful that we have been able to share in the life of this vibrant and energetic follower of Jesus. She remains delightful, sharp-witted and full of life - well-loved by her four children and their spouses, and her twelve grandchildren.</p> <p>Home Address: c/o David &amp; Kathleen Hurst, RR #7  Peterborough ON K9J 6X8</p>



## Events/Advertising



## 50TH ANNIVERSARY

"How Priceless is God's unfailing Love"

**BETHEL CRC OF LACOMBE, ALBERTA,**

will be celebrating their 50th anniversary.

A weekend of praise, thanksgiving and fellowship is planned for

**December 5, 6, & 7, 2003.**

All former and present members and friends are invited to join us in this celebration. For more information, call Eleanor Wildeboer at

403-782-2602 or e-mail: wildeboer@aol.com

1953

**The Christian Reformed Church  
of Alliston**

2003

hopes D.V. to celebrate its 50th Anniversary.

Former ministers, members and friends are cordially invited to attend.

**Saturday November 8th****Open House 2-4pm Dinner 5:30pm Program 7:30pm****Sunday November 9th****Anniversary Services 10:00am & 7:00pm**

Open House and Sunday Services at the CRC 22 Downey Ave.

Saturday Dinner &amp; Program at 160 King St. S.

For information and dinner tickets please contact

Walter &amp; Wendy Colyn

1-705-458-4433 or wcolyn@sympatico.ca



## 25th Anniversary

**HOPE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH**

of Port Perry, Ont.

We invite all former members and friends to join us in a  
celebration of praise and thanksgiving.**October 18th** will be a potluck celebration and**October 19th** our celebration service.For more information call **905-985-9307** or

hopeportperry@sympatico.ca.

With praise to the Lord, we, the congregation of  
**BURLINGTON CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH,**  
hope to celebrate our **50th anniversary.**We would be honoured if you will join us in commemorating  
this momentous occasionon **Saturday, November 1/2003** at 7:00pm.

Program and reception at the

Park Bible Church

1500 Kerns Road, Burlington.

and on **Sunday, November 2/2003** at 10:00am

a celebration service at

Burlington Christian Reformed Church

3422 New Street, Burlington.

Ph: 905-634-0722

E-mail: burlcrrc@direct.com

The **TRANSCONA CRC**will be celebrating their  
**50TH ANNIVERSARY****October 10-14, 2003.**Celebration events include a  
Friday night Coffee House,  
Saturday evening Banquet and  
Special Worship Sun & Mon.  
For Banquet tickets or more  
details call Bev Steendam at  
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Visit our website

[www.mts.net/~vanboven](http://www.mts.net/~vanboven)**NETHERLANDS  
BAZAAR****Saturday, Oct 18, 2003**at the Thornhill Community  
Centre, Bayview & John St.  
between Steeles & Hwy. 7  
free parking.**Market Place** 10 am - 6 pm**Auction & Raffle** 6 - 10 pm**Restaurant** 10 am - 9 pm**To God Be the Glory for the Things He Has Done.****The Christian Reformed Church of  
Collingwood, ON**hopes to celebrate its **50th anniversary** on Saturday & Sunday  
October 18 & 19, 2003.There will be a pot-luck dinner at 5:00 p.m. on Saturday at the  
church followed by entertainment. Special Services will be held  
on Sunday at 10:00 am and 7:00 pm.

All former members and friends are invited to attend.

For more information please contact Clarence Feenstra at

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the Men of Note

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Saturday October 18, 2003, marks the

**50th ANNIVERSARY of****THE INGERSOLL  
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a dinner program on the evening of that date, beginning at  
six p.m., in the Columbo Hall, Beachville.Former members and friends are hereby most cordially invited  
to join us for the evening.For further information, reservation and dinner tickets please  
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REFORMED CHURCH**

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For more information about our celebration, please visit our website  
at [www.willowdalecrrc.com](http://www.willowdalecrrc.com) or phone us at 416-221-7829.**REDEEMER  
University College**

invites you to join us for

**HERITAGE DAY****MONDAY, OCT. 27**

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"Three Curves in my Life".Guests will have an opportunity to meet with their  
grandchildren and a program is also being  
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**(905) 648-2131 ext. 4208 to register****We look forward to seeing you!**



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**Mr. Darrell Renkema**  
Delta Christian School  
4789 53 Street, Delta, BC V4K 2Y9

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The three Christian Reformed Churches of Sarnia, Ontario are seeking a **full time Youth Director/Pastor** to continue a

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**Art Capelle,**  
2261 Confederation, Sarnia, Ontario, N7T-7H3,  
519-337-4660 or email: [artc@rivernet.net](mailto:artc@rivernet.net)

**BETHLEHEM CRC, THUNDER BAY, ONTARIO**, is a caring community of believers whose vision is "Embracing God to Touch Your Life." It is our desire as a church to share God's love with a broken and hurting world. We seek a **FULL-TIME PASTOR** to join our 240 member congregation.

For further information, or to obtain a copy of our church profile, please contact committee chair Mrs. Raili Paulusma  
[paulusme@tbaytel.net](mailto:paulusme@tbaytel.net)  
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## Dordt College

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**Theology** General education courses in biblical theology and upper level biblical studies courses.

Evaluation of applications will continue until the positions are filled. To learn more about a position and receive application materials, qualified persons committed to a Reformed, biblical perspective and educational philosophy are encouraged to send a letter of interest and curriculum vita/resume to:

Dr. Rockne McCarthy  
Vice President for Academic Affairs  
Dordt College  
498 4th Ave. NE  
Sioux Center, IA 51250-1697  
Web site: [www.dordt.edu/offices/academic\\_affairs](http://www.dordt.edu/offices/academic_affairs)

Facsimile: 712 722-4496

E-mail: [vpaa@dordt.edu](mailto:vpaa@dordt.edu)

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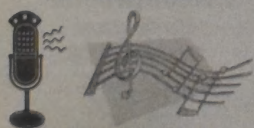
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[info@fleetwoodcra.org](mailto:info@fleetwoodcra.org)

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## REDEEMER University College

### DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

Redeemer University College invites applications for a tenure-track position in History to begin August 2004. Candidates must be specialists in North American history and be able to teach a survey course in Western or World history.

As a liberal arts and sciences university college rooted in the Reformed tradition of Christianity, we seek candidates who are committed to teaching and pursuing scholarship from this perspective. Applicants should possess, or be near completion of, a Ph.D. Interested applicants should submit a *curriculum vitae* and three letters of reference. The deadline for applications is December 1, 2003 or until the position is filled.

Direct general inquiries and applications to:

Dr. Jacob P. Ellens, Vice-President (Academic)  
Redeemer University College  
777 Garner Road East  
Ancaster, ON L9K 1J4 Canada  
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Dr. Jacob P. Ellens  
Vice-President (Academic), Redeemer University College  
777 Garner Rd. E., Ancaster, Ontario, Canada L9K 1J4  
Fax: 905/648-2134, E-mail: [jellens@redeemer.on.ca](mailto:jellens@redeemer.on.ca)

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## Classifieds

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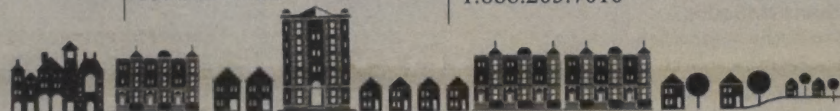
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## Events/Advertising

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Items appearing in this column are run free of charge if they advertise an admission-free event, if they accompany an ad for the same event, or at the discretion of CC. In case of free listing, space limitations apply. The charge otherwise is \$7.50 per line, or \$1.50 per 1/3 line, per insertion

- Oct 10-14** The Transcona CRC (Winnipeg, Manitoba) will be celebrating its 50th Anniversary with praise, thanksgiving & fellowship. For info call: Bev Steendam at 204-853-2150 or jsteenda@mts.net
- Oct 11,12** First CRC, Guelph, Ont. 50th anniversary. Celebrations include childrens programs, Social, Banquet. See September issue for more details or e-mail: crc-guelph@sentex.net
- Oct 14** Fryske Krite presents the comedy "Ferhuzing en Oare Ungemakken" Trenton Christian Sch. Trenton, Ont. Tickets \$12.00. Contact: Rose Devries (905) 623-0164. See ad
- Oct 15** Fryske Krite presents the comedy "Ferhuzing en Oare Ungemakken" Jarvis Community Centre, Jarvis, Ont. Tickets \$12.00. Contact: Rose Devries (905) 623-0164. See ad
- Oct 17** Fryske Krite presents the comedy "Ferhuzing en Oare Ungemakken" Durham Christian Homes, Whitby, Ont. Tickets \$12.00. Contact: Rose Devries (905) 623-0164. See ad
- Oct 18** Fryske Krite presents the comedy "Ferhuzing en Oare Ungemakken" Knox Chr. Sch. Bowmanville Ont. Tickets \$12.00. Contact: Rose Devries (905) 623-0164. See ad
- Oct 18** Ingersoll CRC 50th anniversary. Dinner program at 6 p.m. Columbo Hall, Beachville. For info & dinner tickets, call Jane Heerema at 519-485-1113
- Oct 18** Netherlands Bazaar, Thornhill Community Centre, 7755 Bayview Avenue, Thornhill. Market Place: Crafts, etc. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Auction 7 p.m. - 10 p.m. Dutch food delicacies 10 a.m. - 9 p.m. Admission free. For information, call 905-477-1243
- Oct 18** A Day of Encouragement and training for deacons, elders and all other interested church members at Hamilton District Christian High School in Ancaster. Theme: "Delight in Him!". Choose from 50 workshops and 15 "Service Sites". All sessions are open to everyone. Cost: \$50. Contact your deacons for a registration form, or contact Diaconal Ministries at (905)336-2920 or visit us at [www.diaconalministries.com](http://www.diaconalministries.com).
- Oct 18** Brant Christian School, Brantford, Ont. 40th anniversary celebrations. For dinner tickets or more info, contact school at 752-0433 or email [bcs@brant.net](mailto:bcs@brant.net)
- Oct 18,19** Hope Christian Reformed Church of Port Perry, Ont. will be celebrating their 25th anniversary. For more information call 905-985-9307 or [hopeportperry@sympatico.ca](mailto:hopeportperry@sympatico.ca). See this issue for details.
- Oct 18, 19** Collingwood, Ont. CRC 50th anniversary. For more info, contact Clarence Feenstra at (705) 429-6091 or e-mail at [klaasf@sympatico.ca](mailto:klaasf@sympatico.ca) See ad this issue for more details.
- Oct 19** Willowdale CRC 40th anniversary celebration. See ad p. 20 for more info.
- Oct 27** Heritage Day at Redeemer University College, Ancaster, Ont. Speaker: Dr. Bert Polman. Featuring: program of student music. See ad this issue
- Nov 1,2** Burlington CRC 50th anniversary. Saturday, program and reception 7 p.m. at Part Bible Church and Sunday, celebration service at Burlington CRC. See ad this issue.
- Nov 7** Christian Festival Concert under the direction of Leendert Kooij in ROY THOMSON HALL. \$30/\$22/\$16 Call 416-636-9779.
- Nov 8** Salem Mental Health Assoc 40th anniversary celebration dinner 6:00 p.m. at Redeemer University, Ancaster, Ont. Reservations required. Phone 905-528-0353 or email: [salem@salem.on.ca](mailto:salem@salem.on.ca)
- Nov 8** Concert of Sacred Music by St. Thomas Cresendo Male Choir 7:30 p.m. Centennial Road Standard Church, Centennial Road, North of Brockville. Freewill offering. (613)923-2487
- Nov 8,9** Alliston CRC 50th anniversary. Sat. open house, dinner, program, Sun. special services. For more info, see ad this issue or call 1-705-458-4433 or [wcolyn@sympatico.ca](mailto:wcolyn@sympatico.ca)
- Nov 14** Concert in the Clinton Chr. Ref. Church at 7:30 p.m. Tickets \$10; \$5 for children. See ad p.21
- Nov 22** Concert of Sacred Music by St. Thomas Cresendo Male Choir 7:30 p.m. First Christian Reformed Church, 33 Shirley Ave., Barrie. Freewill offering. (519)637-4357
- Nov 29** Concert of Sacred Music by St. Thomas Cresendo Male Choir 7:30 p.m. Providence United Reformed Church, 447 Second St., Strathroy. Freewill offering. (519)637-4357
- Dec 5, 6,7** Bethel CRC of Lacombe, Alberta, 50th anniversary - weekend of praise, thanksgiving and fellowship. All former and present members and friends are invited. For info, call: Eleanor Wildeboer at 403-782-2602 or e-mail [wilewildeboer@aol.com](mailto:wilewildeboer@aol.com) (See ad this issue)
- Dec 14** Concert of Sacred Music by St. Thomas Cresendo Male Choir 7:30 p.m. Knox Presbyterian Church, 55 Hinks St., St. Thomas. Freewill offering for Christmas Care & Salvation Army. For info: (519) 637-4357
- Jan 17** Concert of Sacred Music by St. Thomas Cresendo Male Choir 7:30 p.m. Wallaceburg Christian Reformed Church, 150 Bruinsma Ave., Wallaceburg. Freewill offering for the Canadian Bible Society. (519)637-4357
- April 10** Annual Festival of Praise by the Christian Male Chorus Association of South Western Ontario. 7:30 p.m. Centennial Hall, 550 Wellington St. London. Five choirs with over 200 men participating. Ticket: \$13 (519)451-5484 or email: [jeltrickk@sympatico.ca](mailto:jeltrickk@sympatico.ca) For information: (519)637-4357.



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## News

## New teen Bible has look of fashion magazine



Michael Foust

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—It's billed as the first Bible "designed to look like a teen fashion magazine," and it's selling.

Transit Books released *Revolve* this summer in hopes of getting more teen girls to read the Bible. To do so, they interspersed the books of the New Testament with items normally reserved for teen fashion magazines.

For example, one page contains most of Luke 21 along with a graphic showing a guy describing the "ideal girl." A few pages over and a few inches from John 3:16, teen girls can read tips on plucking their eyebrows (begin by "placing a warm rag over them").

Supporters say the colorful design will get more teen girls into the Word of God. Critics say that while the intent is good, the publication ends up trivializing Scripture.

Even the cover looks like a fashion magazine: Three young girls laughing it up, having a good time.

A promotional section on Transit Books' website proclaims, "The New Testament gets a makeover," and so far, teen girls are buying them. Thomas Nelson — which owns Transit Books — has shipped some 40,000 units to stores and is scheduled to have another 60,000 in inventory in late September. It has climbed into the top 200 on Amazon.com's list of best-sellers — not bad considering the online store sells thousands of books.

The idea for the publication began some two years ago when Thomas Nelson research found that teen girls weren't reading their Bibles. They were, though, reading magazines.

"That was really where the idea ... was birthed," said Laurie Whaley, a company spokesperson. "What if we could take the

Bible and make it look like a magazine?"

She said those working on the project "felt like this was a way in which we could show teen girls the Bible is relevant, the Bible is engaging, the Bible is applicable to where you live today."

The response has been mostly positive, Whaley said. Still, some evangelicals are asking: Is this such a good idea?

### Bible should stand alone

Mary Mohler, wife of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary President R. Albert Mohler Jr., said there are several "worthwhile" publications in the Christian market dealing with "beauty, dating and growing up in general." The Bible, though, should stand alone, she said.

"The notion that Scripture should be repackaged to stand alongside issues such as these and be put in a

tabloid-style cover with the words 'New Testament' printed randomly amidst the catchy topical headlines is deplorable," said Mohler.

But others believe the publication is a good idea.

Dennis Dean, director of high schools at Olive Baptist Church in Pensacola, Fla., believes the colorful cover will serve as a "door-opener" to get teens girls into the Bible.

"That's a huge piece of the puzzle of sharing the Gospel," he said. "... The Word of God is living and true and it will change somebody's life if they'll read it, and this is another avenue to get them to read it."

The publication has some 10 categories of special features sprinkled throughout its pages. "Bible Bios" tell about famous women of the Bible. "Beauty Secrets" give practical beauty tips a spiritual twist ("You need a good, balanced foundation for the rest of your makeup, kinda like how Jesus is the strong foundation in our lives.").

*Revolve*, which uses the New Century Version translation, takes conservative stances on several biblical issues. It condemns homosexuality and embraces chastity ("Wait for marriage to open that precious gift."). It warns against spreading rumors and tells teen girls to obey their parents. It even tells girls that guys should take the lead in the relationship.

The publication's opinions on dating are varied. While one "Blab" answer tells girls not to date until they're "ready for what it leads to, marriage," much of the magazine gives guidance to those who are dating.

### Boys' version planned

Responses have been so positive that a boys' version is set to be released next spring. It will focus on several issues: sex, girls, dating, cars, outdoors, sports, music

and money, Whaley said. Additionally, a girls' version with Psalms, Proverbs and the Wisdom books will be released next spring.

When the second edition is released this fall, it will have a few minor changes. One of those, Whaley said, will be the elimination of several pictures. While one of the "Blab" experts criticizes midriff-baring shirts, several pictures show models wearing them. One page even has a photo of girls in bikinis. Such pictures will be gone, she said.

Consistent with the magazine's theme, most of the models look as if they could have graced the cover of a mainstream fashion magazine. That concerns some.

"You have to wonder about the seeking teenage girl who does not have the looks of a movie star," said Russell D. Moore, assistant professor of Christian theology at Southern Seminary. "Is she somehow of less value and worth?"

Whaley, though, asserts that the magazine consistently preaches the importance of inner beauty. One full-page quiz asks girls, "Do you have a healthy body image?"

and then tells those who fail the test: "Come on, girl! Don't you know that God created you, and he calls your body a 'temple for the Holy Spirit'?"

"We want them to understand at this crucial time in their life," Whaley said, "that inner beauty is very, very important, and the world focuses on teaching you how to be externally beautiful."

Moore said he appreciates the fact that the publisher is trying to reach teen girls, but said he believes *Revolve* ends up trivializing Scripture.

"The biggest problem is the confusion of authority," he said. "When you have the Gospel of John interspersed with beauty tips and an advice column and the random opinions of teenage boys, it's hard to see the authority of Scripture in all of that silliness," he said.

"This Bible seems to reassure teenage girls that they should continue pursuing the kind of worldly aims of external beauty and affluence. And I think Scripture is calling them to something completely different."

## Habitat for Humanity Toronto hosts 1st annual Faith Leaders Build



Toronto, Canada — Wearing steel toes and dirty jeans, 70 clergy and laypersons from 35 churches, mosques & synagogues hammered nails for Habitat for Humanity in the first annual "Faith Leaders Build." Over lunch, participants' competitive sides broke through with an old-fashioned hammering contest. We are proud to announce that the Rev. Mary Joseph (Deer Park United Church) took the lead in the ladies heat, while Jim Parker (Bethany Baptist Church) won in the men's category.

The Faith Leaders' Build is part of Habitat for Humanity International's "Building on Faith Week," which celebrates and recognizes the importance of faith partnerships in Habitat for Humanity's mission to eradi-

cate poverty housing. Together we are making the dream of affordable housing a reality for families living in need. The event took place at Habitat for Humanity Toronto's Home Building Factory, a giant warehouse where volunteers come to build homes alongside partner families. Faith Leaders built walls and floors for 40 homes, as a part of Habitat for Humanity Toronto's "Breakthrough Build".

Together with partner families, volunteers, donors and corporate sponsors, Habitat for Humanity builds one new home every 26 minutes somewhere in the world. To date, Habitat for Humanity has built more than 150,000 homes in 89 countries.